

The Happiness of God Daniel 1-6 Summary

Introduction

Have you ever heard of the words “revival” or “awakening” before? Both a revival and an awakening are essentially the same phenomena. Let me begin by telling you what a revival is not. A revival is not a worship service that includes a sermon full of manipulative appeals to renew your vows to Jesus.¹ In their book on revival titled, *A God-sized Vision*, Collen Hansen and John Woodbridge state that during a genuine revival, “the Holy Spirit contends and convicts, but he does not manipulate as he grants Christians a new experience of God’s presence and power. Anytime a genuine revival was experienced, the Church first developed a renewed appreciation and love for central truths of Scripture such as the authority of Scripture, that sinners are justified by faith alone in Christ alone, that the death of Jesus on the cross is enough to cover all our sins, Jesus’ miraculous resurrection, the sovereign intervention of God in our world, and God’s holiness and judgment of sin.”²

In our history as a nation, we have witnessed four legitimate revivals. There was the *First Great Awakening* (1730-1740’s), there was the *Second Great Awakening* (1790’s-1840’s), then there was the *Prayer Meeting Revival* (1857-1858), and finally there was the *Global Awakening* that began in Wales and then spread to India, Korea, and then finally America (1904-1910). Hansen and Woodbridge observe from their research that, “During revival, the church worships, prays, preaches, and evangelizes only with intensified force.” One of the men who witnessed the *Prayer Meeting Revival* in New York, observed, “In the church there is a genuine revival when she rises and shakes herself from the dust and puts on her beautiful garments, which have been laid aside to her great discomfort and reproach.”³

In 1904, the *Global Awakening* broke out in Europe and eventually spread to Pennsylvania and ultimately throughout North America; it was also known as the Great Welsh Revival. By 1905, local revivals blazed in places like Brooklyn, Michigan, Schenectady, Nebraska, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Taylor University, Yale University, Asbury College, and of all places – Denver, Colorado. During the revival, police reported a 60% drop in drunkenness and 40% fewer people in jail. Profanity so diminished in the coalmines that the mining horses responsible for pulling the coal carts did not understand the commands of the miners. When the revival swept through Louisville, Kentucky, the press reported that fifty-eight of the leading business firms closed at noon for prayer meetings. When the revival swept through Denver, it had a similar affect in Colorado as it had everywhere else; to my knowledge, I do not believe that it ever reached Wyoming.

¹ Collin Hansen, John Woodbridge, *A God-Sized Vision* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan; 2010), p. 11.

² *Ibid*, p. 14.

³ *Ibid*, p. 29.

Revivals do not happen often and they are a supernatural phenomena involving the powerful move of the Holy Spirit through a people and in the communities they live. When a revival does happen, it happens as a result of the prayers of his people during times of moral and spiritual decline. Revivals are then sparked by the preaching of God's word and received through the deep conviction of those sitting under such preaching, which is a conviction that only the Holy Spirit can bring on a deeply profound level within the souls and minds of those hearing the word of God preached. From what I can tell, it seems to me that when true revival does come, it first awakens a renewed love in the people of God for the God of the Bible.

Here is what I want to do with the time that we have left in this sermon. I want to first remind you why Daniel is in your Bible, and then I hope to show you what the Holy Spirit is screaming to you from the pages of Daniel that is for you. Then I want to circle back around and tell you why what I just told you about revival is relevant for us today.

Why Daniel Was Written

In Christian circles, especially in the Evangelical tribe that many of us identify with, we tend to read Daniel and it's counterpart, the book of Revelation, as books describing something that is coming that really does not apply to us directly... yet. There is a danger we face as we read and study Daniel 7-12 that the dangers we are warned of do not really apply to us because it already has happened or we will not be on planet earth when it eventually happens. We do the same thing with the book of Revelation. Both Daniel and Revelation are books that describe what has happened, what is happening, and what will happen. Both Daniel and Revelation describe the rise of kingdoms and their fall, both books describe a man of lawlessness who is coming and a spirit of lawlessness that is in our world. Both books describe a danger that is as old as the tower of Babel in Genesis 11, is presently active today, and will eventually be destroyed in the future; I am talking about the spirit of Babylon.

In Genesis 11, a group of people came together to build a tower to heaven to make a name for themselves; the tower and place were named Babel. From Babel we get the name Babylon. In Revelation 17, Babylon is referred to as "The Great Prostitute" with whom, "**the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk**" (v. 2). Babylon is always associated with mankind's desire to be great without the presence of God, and she is also likened to a woman who is later contrasted with the Bride of Christ (the Church) in Revelation 17. The apostle John describes what he was shown in a vision:

I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality. And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations." And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her, I marveled greatly. (Revelation 17:1-6)

What was written on the prostitute's head was an ideology and that ideology is anti-God, anti-Christ, and anti-Church. The beast that she is riding is Rome; we know this because it has seven

heads, which is figurative of the seven mountains that Rome was situated between. When Christians in the first century read the book of Revelation, they would have rightly understood the prostitute to be riding the beast that was first-century Rome. Rome is not the only beast she has ridden either. The point is not what kingdom is coming, but a warning to the Church to watch out that the spirit of Babylon does not seduce her. The first six chapters of Daniel are essentially warning us of the same dangers.

Before we get into Daniel 7-12, I need you to understand something. I need you to understand that Daniel and Revelation serve to both encourage us of a victory only God can win for us and to warn us of the dangers of Babylon and the world around us presently. Babylon is seductive! Babylon looks beautiful! Babylon promises life! Babylon promises joy! Babylon promises fun! Babylon promises safety! Babylon makes her promises because she wants to rob you and destroy you. We see her true colors after her destruction in Revelation 18:2-3,

“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living.” (Revelation 18:2–3, ESV)

That warning is for us! What is Babylon? She is the ideology of the nations that seeks a glory above the glory of God. Babylon will try to seduce you into believing that you can be satisfied in her instead of being satisfied in God. She is anything you believe will bring pleasure in place of happiness only God can give. Babylon is, **“a dwelling place for demons, and a haunt for every unclean and detestable thing.”** She will rob you, she will leave you empty and sick, and she will eventually eat you alive! Daniel and Revelation warn us of her and serve to embolden us to stand against her and any beast she is riding!

We, the American Church, have bought into the lies of the whore of Babylon, and some of you may not even see it or know it. We have bought into ideologies and promises that have seduced you out of a dependence upon Jesus for a satisfaction and joy only he can give. Those promises come in all shapes and sizes: blue, red, an image on a screen, wealth, comfort, safety, relationships, sex, a job, anything that seduces you away from Jesus is a whore that will make you weak, sick, and eventually kill you! This is why, we, the American church, are so sick. It is as if we have suffered from a spiritual pandemic that has left some with little to no desire to taste and see that the LORD is good (see Psalm 34:8).

So how do we get better? Daniel offers us a three-fold remedy that I will only mention briefly since I have already preached on them on three separate Sundays. The three-fold remedy I am about to share with you will serve to guard your heart against idols and enable you to stand against the seductive power of Babylon. Here is what the New Testament says about the fight that you and I are in that will help you understand why you need to hear what I am about to say; here it is:

“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the

knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.” (2 Corinthians 10:3–6)

How do you guard against idols and stand against Babylon? You do it by taking every thought captive by understanding and seeing whom God is.

Only God Can Change Times and Seasons (2:20-23, 47)

There is only one who can change times and seasons, there is only one who removes kings and sets up kings, there is only one who gives wisdom and understanding, who reveals deep and hidden things, and knows what is in the darkness, and it is not Babylon. It is not the Republican Party, it is not the Democrat Party, it is not a Republic nor is it a democracy, it is not the woke culture, and it certainly is not in what truth you think is “your” truth. Listen, if you really want to stand against Babylon and fight against the idols that seek to rob, kill, and destroy your life and joy, you have got to start by understanding that you are not the measure of all that is right and true.

There is only one God and he will not share his throne with anyone especially a foolish wantabe that we humans tend to gravitate towards being. You do know what a wantabe is right? A wantabe, according to the Urban Dictionary, is “a person who sees their self as or wants to be something they are not.” There is only one God and you are not he. God is the only being in the Universe who does not need to improve upon himself.

Only God is Eternally Sovereign and Benevolent (4:3, 34-37)

What is true of Babylon and Idols is that they promise to give you what they have no power to give. Any thing, any ideology, or any person that you rise up as more important than God or seek from a thing, an ideology, or a person what only God can give is an idol that will rob you of the life and joy that only God can give. If the God of the Bible is truly God, then he must be all things perfect, and nothing can be above him or equal to him. Therefore, God is equally, perfectly, and infinitely holy. God is equally, perfectly, and infinitely just. God is equally, perfectly, and infinitely powerful, wise, and all-knowing. If God is truly God, then he is also equally, perfectly, and infinitely merciful. This means that God is equally, perfectly, and infinitely loving. Because God is God, he is equally, perfectly, and infinitely graceful. God is all these things and therefore he is equally, perfectly, and infinitely benevolent.

In the midst of Israel’ idolatry, God accused his people of two evils: **“Be appalled, o heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate declares the LORD, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water”** (Jer. 2:12-13). They traded the all-sufficient God who seeks to be our God by offering us himself, in exchange for idols that rob, kill, and destroy (see John 10:10). If you want to stand firm against Babylon and resist her seductive lies, then you need to understand that God alone is sovereign and benevolent.

Only God Can Rescue You from Babylon (6:26-28)

After Darius was manipulated into having Daniel thrown into the lion’s den in Daniel 6, the king and all who watched Daniel enter the place full of hungry lions believed that he would become their lunch. As the den was being sealed, Darius shouted: **“May your God, whom you serve**

continually, deliver you” (v. 16). The next morning, we are told that the king, who was so worried about Daniel that, **“sleep fled from him”** (v. 18), discovered that God spared Daniel from the hungry Lions (see vv. 19-23). We know that the lions were hungry because of verse 24, **“And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.”** (Daniel 6:24).

Notice the reason Daniel gave the king for why he survived the night with the lions in the den: **“Then Daniel said to the king, ‘O king, live forever! My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm”**” (Daniel 6:21–22). The point Daniel made to the king was not that he was sinless, but that God did only what God can do. So Darius responded appropriately: **“I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions”** (Daniel 6:26–27).

Daniel’s deliverance in chapter 6 is not a model for how God will deliver his people from suffering in this life, although he sometimes does deliver from physical suffering. Daniel’s deliverance is really a foreshadowing of a day that all whose faith rests in the Son of God who lived the perfect and blameless life on our behalf, who was then sentenced to die as the blameless one for our own guilt upon a cross we all deserved, so that the verdict all who believe in Jesus will hear on the final day will be: “Forgiven.” On the morning of the third day, Jesus defeated sin and death by rising victoriously from the grave and with him was God’s stamp of acquittal seen in his pierced side and nailed scared hands and feet.

Conclusion

Babylon seeks violence upon you, but God has provided a way for you to thrive. Babylon wants to rob you, but God has provided a way for you to become his son or daughter and all the rights that come with being his child. Babylon wants to destroy you, but God has provided a way to make all your sins clean as snow and to make all things about you... new. This is why Jesus said: **“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light”** (Matthew 11:28–30). Of all who find their pardon from their sins through Jesus, the bible says of such people: **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come”** (2 Cor. 5:17).

Jesus is the only avenue by which you will be able to resist Babylon and see the idols of this world for what they are. Until the American Church understands that God is more beautiful than Babylon and the idols of this world, she will remain sick. The only thing I believe will awaken an appetite and hunger for the God of the Bible and the Christ he sent to deliver us from our sin is a revival that only the Holy Spirit can bring. My prayer is that the revival we need in this country will begin here at Meadowbrooke Church.