

Part 14 — “A Quiet Life in the Midst of Political Turmoil” — 4 September 2022

**Introduction:** What do we do when OUR nation rages?

*Psa. 2:1-3*—<sup>1</sup> Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? <sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, <sup>3</sup> “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.”

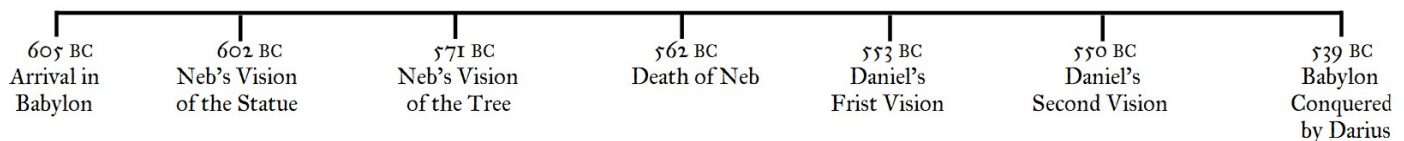
*Psa. 2:10-12*—<sup>10</sup> Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. <sup>11</sup> Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. <sup>12</sup> Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

**Main Point:** As God’s people, we can lead lives of simple \_\_\_\_\_ even in the midst of political turmoil, trusting in the sovereignty of the Most High God and living as His witnesses.

**Belshazzar’s Feast & the Writing on the Wall—Daniel 5:1-17**

**Initial Considerations**

1. The Scriptural account of Daniel’s life and career involves large gaps of time between events.



⇒ From his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s second vision (the tree) until the events at Belshazzar’s banquet (32 years!), we know little about the career of Daniel apart from the visions of Dan. 7-8.

*Dan. 7:28; 8:27*—“Here is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly alarmed me, and my color changed, but I kept the matter in my heart.” ...And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days. Then I rose and went about the king’s business, but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it.

2. The Babylonian empire during this time period faced political instability within and geopolitical threats from without.

**The Successors of Nebuchadnezzar**

1. **Evil-Merodach** (562-560 BC)—The son (not oldest!) of Neb. who released Jehoiachin from prison (2 Kings 25:27-30). He was usurped by his brother-in-law and murdered.
2. **Neriglissar** (560-556 BC)—Son-in-law of Neb. and likely married to his oldest child (Kashshaya). He likely died of old age.
3. **Labashi-Marduk** (556 BC - 2-9 months)—The underage son of Neriglissar. He was usurped by Nabonidus and assassinated.
4. **Nabonidus** (556-539 BC)—Married to a daughter of Neb. (Nitocris), he ruled for an extended period of time, but under a cloud of religious controversy as he worshipped the moon god Sin rather than Marduk. Perhaps for political, religious, or health reasons, he spent the latter portion of his reign outside of Babylon, entrusting his rule to his son.
5. **Belshazzar** (553-539 BC)—Appointed coregent by his father who was rarely in Babylon. In light of the growing threat posed by the Medes and Persians, he attempted to restore the worship of Marduk.

**The Rise of Cyrus the Great**

\* Cyrus was born in 585 BC, the child of a Persian father and Median mother. Although he was initially a Median vassal, he united multiple Persian tribes, consolidating his own power and even making a temporary alliance with Nabonidus. Cyrus progressively captured the various provinces of Babylon, defeating Nabonidus in battle in 539 BC and then sending his army to Babylon itself.

**Key Point:** Although Daniel would have been aware of the internal instability within the Babylonian government and the external threats posed by the Persians, he seems to have continued faithfully in his \_\_\_\_\_:

(1) As a \_\_\_\_\_ “...I kept the matter in my heart.” (7:28)

(2) As a government \_\_\_\_\_ “Then I rose and went about the king’s business...” (8:27)

**The Events at the Feast (5:1-9)**

**Observations**

1. Given the presence of the Persian army outside the city, this seems an odd time for a \_\_\_\_\_.

⇒ The historians Herodotus and Xenophon both relate the Persian taking of Babylon to the fact that a festival was being celebrated in the city where “the citizens drink and make merry the whole night long” (Xenophon).

2. The decision to bring the vessels from the temple and drink from them had \_\_\_\_\_ religious significance.  
*"They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone."*
3. The appearance of the hand was the divine \_\_\_\_\_ to the blasphemy of the king and his guests.  
*"appeared"* (Aram.—*npaq*)                      "Nebuchadnezzar may have exercised his royal power in capturing the sacred vessels, but now God exercises his divine prerogative in bringing the blasphemy to an end." - B.T. Arnold
4. Although the king offered great reward to his wise men in order to understand what was written, they were unable to make sense of the script.

**Key Point:** The failure of the Babylonian wise men was indicative of the impotence of the Babylonian \_\_\_\_\_.

## The Summoning of Daniel (5:10-17)

### Observations

1. The "queen" sought to calm Belshazzar by telling him of the exploits of Daniel under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.
2. The king's interaction with Daniel is filled with irony given the events that transpired earlier in the evening.  
*"...one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought..."*  
*"...but I have heard that you can give interpretations..."*
3. Daniel's response to the king showed that his \_\_\_\_\_ was to serve the Lord in the last years of his life, not receive earthly rewards.  
 "It takes a man of genuinely godly character to pass up the glitter of worldly desires, but that is precisely what Daniel did. Furthermore, for him the rewards were wrong because of the context in which they were offered—a context of belittling the God whom he loved and served."  
 —J. Paul Tanner

**Key Point:** That Daniel would be summoned to the king after all these years was a testimony to the faithfulness he \_\_\_\_\_ at critical times and which he maintained throughout his life.

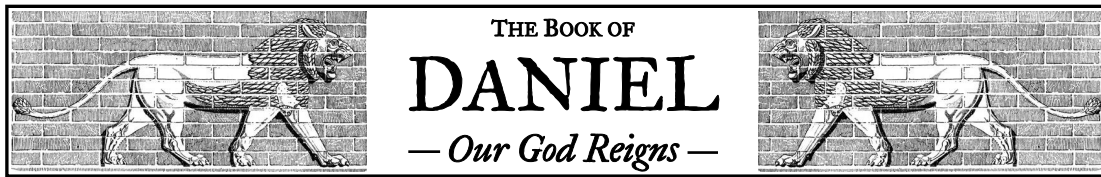
## Living Faithfully in "Babylon"

- How are we as Christians to conduct ourselves in light of the political situation in our nation and the wider geopolitical situation in the world?
  1. We are to \_\_\_\_\_!  
*1 Tim. 2:1-2a—<sup>1</sup> First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in high positions...*

**Why?** *Because we believe that our God is \_\_\_\_\_!*

2. We are to \_\_\_\_\_ faithfulness in our vocations!  
*1 Tim. 2:2b-4—that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. <sup>3</sup> This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*
  - ⇒ Stability in society aids us in carrying out the \_\_\_\_\_  
*"peaceful and quiet life"*
  - ⇒ Stability in society allows us to \_\_\_\_\_ as the church and aids us in carrying out the \_\_\_\_\_  
*"godly"    "dignified"*

**Why?** *Because we believe that we are called by Him to be His \_\_\_\_\_ in the world!*



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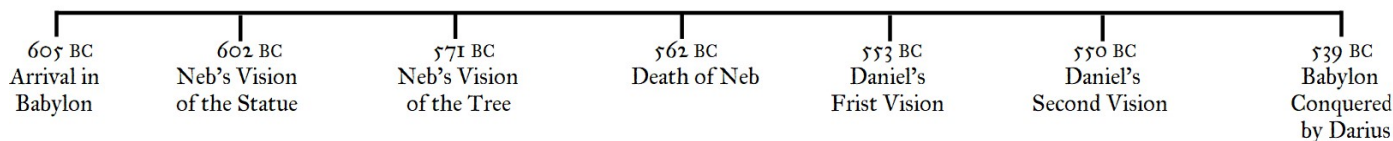
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*Why? Because we believe that our God is sovereign!*

### 2. We are to pursue faithfulness in our vocations!

*1 Tim. 2:2b-4—that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. <sup>3</sup> This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

⇒ Stability in society aids us in carrying out the **cultural mandate**.

*"peaceful and quiet life"*

⇒ Stability in society allows us to **gather** as the church and aids us in carrying out the **great commission**.

*"godly"*

*"dignified"*

*Why? Because we believe that we are called by Him to be His witnesses in the world!*