

PRAISE GOD, HIS WORD IS TRUE!

Before we open God's word this morning I'd like to bring you up to date on what our ministry has accomplished in 2019, and I say our ministry, because nothing would have been accomplished had it not been for those of you who have supported this ministry, so thank you for listening to the Holy Spirit!

Before I give you some website statistics for 2019, I'd like to read a quote from *Review and Herald, November 4, 1875*, "The press is a powerful means to move the minds and hearts of the people. And the men of this world seize the press, and make the most of every opportunity to get poisonous literature before the people. If men, under the influence of the spirit of the world, and of Satan, are earnest to circulate books, tracts, and papers of a corrupting nature, you **(we)** should be more earnest to get reading matter of an elevating and saving character before the people."

Now, this statement is just as true today as it was in 1875, and don't you think the same principle holds true for the Internet? If Satan is using the Internet to put forth information of a poisonous and corrupting nature, which he very definitely is, then we should be even more earnest to get matter of an elevating and saving character before the people, and that's exactly what we're endeavoring to do.

At last count there are 195 countries in the world, and people from 146 of those countries have accessed information from our website this past year. On average there have been about 700 people coming to our website every month for the very first time, which amounts to 8,400 people a year who are brand new visitors to our website, and that figure is nearly doubled when you factor in repeat visitors, which amounts to about 16,000 total visitors for the year. What those 16,000 visitors have done is looked at about 55,000 pages of information and downloaded about 233,000 files to their own computers, tablets, or smart phones. That's over a quarter million files for the entire year that they have saved to their own devices, either for their own benefit or to share with others.

And so you can see how the truth can spread very quickly on the Internet. In fact, when the Sabbath/Sunday issue comes to a head, it will go viral on the Internet and everyone on the planet will hear about the issues that will determine their eternal destiny. This is not to diminish the importance of the printed page, but we should be doing both. And so that's why we are doing everything we can to take advantage of the Internet while there is still opportunity to do so, for the glory of God.

Now this may be a little hard to wrap your head around all these figures that I've shared

with you this morning, but what it means is that there are a whole lot of people listening to or reading the sermons, Bible studies, articles, booklets, and other truth filled literature of various kinds, and who knows how much of that is being shared with others, which multiplies the numbers even further. Now Gospel Workers ministry is not a large ministry, and yet we have accomplished quite a lot with your help, and so I just wanted to let you know how the gospel is going out all over the world, and when you consider what other ministries are also doing, you can see how the great gospel commission can be fulfilled very quickly. Our Lord said, when this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, then shall the end come, and the Internet has made it possible for His words to be fulfilled, not tomorrow, but today! We don't have to look to some future time when this will be accomplished, because the means to get it done are here now! So what this means is that we should be ready at all times should the Lord choose to quickly bring an end to the great controversy. Yes, there are still a few things that need to happen, but we've been told that the last movements will be what? Rapid ones, and we can see that things are already changing rapidly, can't we? After giving the signs for these last days in **Matthew 24**, Jesus said, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." And so, we need to take these things seriously brothers and sisters, and thank you once again for helping us get the word out.

Now let me also give you a short update about Robin, our Bible worker in the Philippines. Recently he received a shipment of literature that took a very long time to get there, but it doesn't take him very long to get it all distributed, so another order has already been placed so he will hopefully have it before the previous order runs out, and as I've mentioned in the past, this is an ongoing project that I hope you'll remember to support. Last month I asked Robin to send me a year end report about some of the things going on in the Philippines, but as of yet it hasn't come. His grandma just passed away at 94 years of age and with her funeral and all I'm sure his time to respond to my request has been limited. So if you could especially remember Robin in prayer during this time of grief, because as he says, "he was a grandma's boy," it would certainly be appreciated, and perhaps next month I'll have more to say about what's being accomplished through his witnessing efforts. So with that being said, let's pray before we open God's holy book.

This morning I'd like to study a chapter in the Old Testament that convinced me, nearly 40 years ago, that the Bible is absolutely true and that there really is a God in heaven.

As you know there are many atheists in the world today. In fact, on any given day you can probably meet one on the streets if you have a mind to ask people if they believe in God, and if it wasn't for this particular chapter in the Bible, I may very well have been an atheist myself. This particular chapter I speak of deals with a forgotten dream; the

forgotten dream of a man who at one time became the highest earthly authority. His name of course was Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon! And were it not for a godly young man by the name of Daniel, this convincing story and prophecy may have never been told.

Turn with me please, to the second chapter of Daniel. **Daniel 2** covers a lot of ground, about 2500 years, and rather than going into great detail about the four successive world empires of Babylon, Medio-Persia, Greece and Rome that this chapter predicted would come, because most of us are pretty well familiar with these four kingdoms and how the Holy Spirit inspired Daniel to write about it before it all happened; but instead what I'd like to bring out this morning are a few points in this chapter you may not have given much thought to before.

So, let's start at the beginning: **Daniel 2:1**. "And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar **(in what year? In the second year, that's significant and we'll see why in a minute. Many times we just gloss over certain things in the Bible as unimportant, but this second year of his reign is very significant)**, in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him."

It's important to note that the year of this dream was 603 B.C., and this date can be verified through secular history, because there are ancient records that tell us when the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign was. So we shouldn't get the idea that any of this chapter was written after the fact, because that's what some people try to say in order to discredit this prophecy. And it wasn't written by someone else after Daniel died who ascribed it to him later on. This chapter was written by Daniel himself long before it's fulfillment, in fact, its complete fulfillment is yet future and it was written especially for those of us who would be living upon the earth at the time of the end. But the point is, just as 99% of this prophecy has already been fulfilled to the letter, the last 1% will be also, and very soon.

As we read this prophecy we need to understand that God is telling us beforehand about nations that would rise and fall before they rose and fell! Who but a supreme intelligence could do such a thing with 100% accuracy? No one but the God of heaven. And so, even though the King's mind was deeply impressed by this dream, he couldn't recall the particulars of it. In fact, Nebuchadnezzar became so frustrated that he decided to enlist some help from those in his realm who claimed to be able to interpret dreams and foretell future events and so forth.

Verse 2, "Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood

before the king.”

What a bunch of characters these so-called wise men must have been. All of them involved in different kinds of spiritualism and not a one of them able to answer the king’s request, because it was beyond their ability to do so, even though they claimed to be able to do such things.

Now, these wise men of Babylon had been supported by the Babylonian government for many years, even by Nebuchadnezzar’s father before him. And so the King says, “look you guys, now it’s payback time! You claim to be wise men able to foretell the future and do supernatural feats of magic, and interpret dreams, so listen up, because there’s something troubling me and I need your expertise.” And as you read this story, I think the king had his doubts that they would be able to do so, but in desperation he called them in, and they probably all stood there very smugly and said to themselves, “that’s right king, we are the great wise men of your kingdom and you’ve done the right thing by summoning us here today, speak forth!”

Verses 3, 4, “And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live forever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation.” And the king said, “uh-uh.” As we’ll see in a minute, the king wasn’t too pleased with their evasive answer, because even if the king was able to tell them the dream, which he couldn’t, he knew that they were quite capable of concocting some kind of story that might seem plausible, but prove to be a false interpretation.

Now, it should be understood at this point that God was the One who gave Nebuchadnezzar the dream in the first place, and He was also the One who caused the king to forget it, and for good reason, as we’ll find out later, and yet there was this fearful impression left upon the king’s mind that needed an explanation.

Verses 5-13, “The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, the thing is gone from me (**in other words, how can I tell you the dream when I can’t remember what it was about? The king wanted an interpretation of a dream that he couldn’t remember, and the wise men must have scratched their heads a little bit. Then the king said**): if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. They answered again and said, let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it. The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for

you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof. The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, there is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.”

Now that wasn't very fair to Daniel and his three friends, was it? Daniel and his companions didn't even have a chance to answer the king, because they hadn't been there. As truly wise men, because they belonged to a wise God, Daniel and his friends didn't hang around the other professedly wise men, and so they weren't there at the time? I'm sure the other wise men didn't consider them part of their elite group, because they were different and didn't worship the gods they worshiped. At any rate, when the soldiers came for Daniel and his friends, their true wisdom and character was revealed.

Verses 14-18, “Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon: he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.”

By the way, Daniel and his three friends didn't just pray when they were in trouble, like many people do, they were dedicated to God's cause and it was no strange or unusual thing for them to pour out their hearts to the Lord three times a day. At least that was Daniel's custom as it says in **Chapter 6** regarding the lion's den, and I'm pretty sure it was the same with the other three young men as well, because you might recall the fiery furnace and how they were delivered in a miraculous manner. And so, we can all learn a lesson about our prayer life by studying how these four Hebrews lived their lives.

Now, why was it that the king gave Daniel time, but to the other wise men he wouldn't? Don't you think the king must have seen a difference in their characters? Somehow the king knew that Daniel wasn't trying to pull a fast one or just stall for time. Also you'll remember that in **chapter 1** Daniel and his three companions were found to be ten times wiser than the rest of the wise men, because they didn't defile themselves with the king's

meat. Now ten times wiser is really saying something, and the king somehow knew that these young men were different than the others, and so he gave them time. Then after the king granted Daniel's request, he went back to his three companions and they had a prayer meeting like they had never had before. You see, they had enough faith to know that this was an opportunity for God "to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him", as it says in **2 Chronicles 16:9**. They were familiar with what the prophet Hanani said as he gave reproof to Asa, king of Judah, because he didn't rely upon the Lord for help against the king of Israel. You see, God wanted to bring circumstances around so that He would get the credit for delivering Asa rather than help from Benhadad, king of Syria, who was a heathen. Read the story sometime in **2 Chronicles 16**, it's very interesting and it helps us to understand that it's not about us! As Christians our purpose is to make God look good, and not so people will look at us and think we're something special! It's all about God! Daniel and his friends knew this, and with faith they looked to the Lord, not just for the preservation of their own lives, but more importantly so that God's cause would prosper and that He would be glorified in a heathen land, and certainly this was the case when Daniel was promoted to the highest position in the land under the king and later on as you read what happened with the fiery furnace.

Verse 19, "Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven." And wouldn't you? Haven't there been times in your past when God revealed something to you and you just couldn't help but say, "Thank you, Lord!" "Praise Your holy name!" When you did that, you were "blessing the God of heaven." Daniel's first thought was to return praise to the revealer of secrets, that's what Daniel did. He had a prayer of thanksgiving and then ran to his friends as fast as he could and told them not to worry, because God was in control. What a good feeling to know that God has your back, amen? You know, very soon we're all going to have to have a closeness to God like Daniel had, so we better start now if we haven't already.

In **Verses 20-23** his blessing is recorded where it says, "Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons **(in other words, God has the ability to control everything that happens on this planet)**: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: he revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter."

And so Daniel was now fortified to go forth to the king with confidence and with an excitement to see how God's purpose was going to be fulfilled. And you know, that's kind of how we should feel every day, at least to some degree. What is God going to do for me today. How is He going to use me to bring honor and glory to His name. What kind of situation am I going to find myself in, and how is the Lord going to deliver me from the snares of the enemy. What kind of temptations am I going to meet and how is He going to deliver me from them today. How is He going to help me to be an overcomer. You see, there ought to be a little excitement and wonder as to how God's going to work in my behalf and in behalf of those I'm praying for, and you know, the more careful we are to follow His instructions and to advance His cause, the more exciting it gets as we anticipate how it's all going to work out.

Verse 24, "Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation."

When Daniel came before the king, don't you think the king took notice of him that he had been with Jesus? His countenance must have shown with confidence and excitement, in fact, in the next chapter Nebuchadnezzar got a glimpse of Jesus Himself when he saw, not three men in the fiery furnace, but four, and the fourth one was like unto the Son of God, he said. I don't know where Daniel was during the fiery furnace ordeal, we'll find out when we get to heaven, but you can be sure that he told the king at some point prior to that what the coming Messiah looked like, or the king wouldn't have expressed himself the way he did.

It's worthy of notice here, in the verse we just read, that Daniel's first plea was for **(who?)** the wise men of Babylon, and it's interesting also that they were eventually saved from being executed because there was a man of God among them, and we're not told, but perhaps some of those wise men accepted the God of heaven as a result. That's something else we'll find out when we get to heaven. You see, God works to save everyone, even astrologers, magicians, soothsayers, and Chaldeans, and in His master plan I'm sure these men were given an opportunity to know the truth. God is able to work all these things out and take into account every individual's life experience and save them if they have a mind to be saved. In **John 1:9**, speaking of Jesus, John says, "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." And so every person born into this world has a chance somewhere along the way to accept the free gift of eternal life. Everyone gets an opportunity to know the truth, and as a result they will not be able to give an excuse by saying, "I didn't know", because God will be able to bring to their mind just when and where the opportunity came and what their response was.

And here's another thought, just as all the wise men were saved because there was a man of God among them, it's the same with all the wicked upon the earth today. They don't realize it, but they owe their very existence to the righteous. Turn with me to the book of **Acts** and I'll show you that this is absolutely true.

Acts 16:25-30, "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Also **Acts 27:22-25**, "And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."

In ***The Desire of Ages, page 306*** it says, "Hearts that respond to the influence of the Holy Spirit are the channels through which God's blessing flows. Were those who serve God removed from the earth, and His Spirit withdrawn from among men, this world would be left to desolation and destruction, the fruit of Satan's dominion. Though the wicked know it not, they owe even the blessings of this life to the presence, in the world, of God's people whom they despise and oppress."

And so, as children of God, we are the channels through which God's blessing flows. For the sake of the righteous, even today the world is spared, and this has been the case many times in the past, and until probation closes the wicked are spared because of God's people, and there are many more examples of this in the Bible that I might mention. For instance, once the few righteous persons of Noah's day were safe in the ark, the flood came, didn't it? Once Lot and his two daughters had departed from Sodom, fire came down and destroyed the cities of the plain. If only 10 righteous persons could have been found in Sodom the Lord would have spared the city for the righteous' sake. And it won't be any different in the last days when God's longsuffering is finally exhausted. When the righteous are removed, then the wicked are destroyed. And so, it's kind of ironic that in the end the wicked will try to destroy the very ones to whom they owe their very existence.

Verses 25-45, “Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, the secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. **(Notice, this chapter has to do with the latter days, or the days just before Jesus returns)** Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; as for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. **(This is the second time Daniel tells the king that it’s the God in heaven who gets the credit)** But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, **(here we see the humility of Daniel)** but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart. Thou O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.”

Now here we have a prophecy of a second kingdom, represented by the breast and arms of silver, that would conquer the great and powerful Babylon represented by the head of gold: the first of the world empires. Then a third kingdom, represented by the belly and thighs of brass, that would conquer the kingdom that conquered Babylon; then a fourth kingdom represented by the legs of iron, that would conquer the third, and then the division of the fourth kingdom represented by the ten toes of the image, and yet a fifth kingdom, the kingdom of God, which shall never be destroyed. We’re not told in **Daniel 2** that the great image comprised of four different types of metal represented four successive kingdoms, you have to read **Daniel 5 and 7** and put those two chapters together with history to find out that the three successive kingdoms that came after Babylon were Medio-Persia, Greece, and Rome, and then the ten divisions of Rome, but Daniel must have explained that to the king, because that’s why he made an image that was all gold in the next chapter, because Nebuchadnezzar didn’t want to accept the fact that Babylon would come to an end by being conquered by another power, but what a

wonderful and accurate prophecy this turns out to be, and it's all been fulfilled except for all previous kingdoms being blown away and the setting up of the kingdom of God. As I mentioned at the beginning, **Daniel 2** covers about 2500 years of history written in advance, and comes right down to the very time in which we are living today, and the kingdom of God is soon to be set up, and history as we know it will soon come to an end. The question is, will we be citizens of God's eternal kingdom after all earthly kingdoms have run their course?

And so, **Verse 44** is the only part of this prophecy yet to be fulfilled, and just as all the other kingdoms have come and gone as predicted, so the kingdom of God will be set up very soon, and it will never be destroyed. All those who reject salvation will be destroyed, but everyone whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, just like the kingdom of God, will never be destroyed.

Verse 46, "Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him."

Now I'm sure this poor king, with his limited knowledge of the true God, was doing the best he knew to express his thankfulness, and I'm sure also that Daniel tactfully called his attention to what he already said in **verse 28** when he said, "there is a God in heaven that reveals secrets", it's not me! And in **verse 30** when he said, "this secret wasn't revealed to me because I'm someone special." We're just not told any of these details, but you can be sure that Daniel was careful to give God the glory and to help the king understand that it's the Lord that deserves all the credit and all the worship.

Verse 47, "The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret."

So Nebuchadnezzar finally got it, didn't he? At least temporarily. He still had some important lessons to learn, but at this point he got it. The problem is, like many of us, he had a short memory. He still had to eat grass like an ox for seven years, but he finally came to realize that there's a God in heaven, and that He was interested in saving the King for all eternity, and you know what? we will see Nebuchadnezzar in heaven if we are faithful to the end.

Verse 48, "Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon."

It was never Daniel's purpose to gain a high position or some kind of reward for his service, but God gave it to him anyway, didn't He? because He knew he could handle it,

and in the end the God of heaven will do the same for all the faithful, because we will all be given a position we don't deserve except for the sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross of Calvary.

Verse 49, "Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king."

Daniel never became exalted in his own eyes because of the honors confirmed upon him, but he remembered his three friends. Since they shared in the prayer for God to reveal Himself, they should also share in the reward.

Now, before we close I'd like to give you a few facts about Babylon and introduce you to another prophecy that helped me come to the conclusion that the Bible is true. We know from archeological findings that Babylon really did exist, in fact it was one of the ancient wonders of the world. Babylon was laid out in a perfect 60 mile square, 15 miles on each side, and it was surrounded by a wall that was over 200 feet high and 87 feet thick, with a moat, or a large ditch filled with water that surrounded the city, being as wide and deep as the walls were thick. When Babylon was shut off to the outside world, it was completely impregnable. With the weapons of warfare then known, it couldn't be touched. There were enough provisions on hand inside the city to feed all the people for, 20 years, and enough farm land within the walls to furnish food indefinitely, and the Euphrates River twisted its way through the city for miles with huge solid brass gates and bars of iron that restricted entrance to the city where the river flowed through, and yet God said it would be conquered.

Now, there's a lot more that could be said about the beauty and excellence of this great city, but the point is, humanly speaking, it seemed that Babylon could never be conquered and that it would stand forever, but one day a man by the name of Darius, king of the Medes came along with his nephew Cyrus who was a Persian and changed all that. At one time the Medes and Persians were separate tribes, but at this point in history they had become united into one nation. Cyrus, as general of the army, had already conquered all the cities of the east except for Babylon, and so the Medes and Persians decided to lay siege to the city two years after Nebuchadnezzar died and when his grandson Belshazzar was ruling in his place.

Well, it didn't take Cyrus very long to figure out that Babylon wasn't going to be an easy conquest. One day as the Babylonians scoffed at Cyrus from their lofty and impregnable walls, he learned of an annual feast in which the whole city would be given up to partying and drunkenness, so he fixed upon that day to attack the city. Cyrus knew there was no entrance into the city unless he could find it where the Euphrates River entered and

exited as it passed beneath the walls. So, he decided to divert the river to make a way for his army to enter the stronghold of the enemy. On the evening of the Babylonian feast the river was turned aside from its channel through the city and as the water receded and the soldiers made their way toward the city through the river bed, guess what they found? In the drunken revelry of the night, the gates were left open just as Isaiah the prophet said over 150 years before. And if you'll turn with me to **Isaiah 45**, we'll read about this prophecy.

Isaiah 45:1-5, "Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name (**that's an important point**), am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me."

To predict the future is something only God could do, and not only did God reveal the future about the conquest of Babylon by Medio-Persia, but He called Cyrus by name over 150 years before he was born. Pretty amazing, huh? In fact, what we just read in **Isaiah 45** was written in 712 B.C., 174 years before the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon.

This annual feast of the Babylonians is described in detail in **Daniel 5** and I'd like to read the whole chapter about what happened there that night so we can get a sense of what took place, but we don't have the time. Maybe you could do that this afternoon.

Because Babylon was such a beautiful city you would think that the Medes and Persians would naturally set up shop and make it the seat of their world empire and maintain it in all its splendor, wouldn't you? But they didn't! And you now what? God knew ahead of time that they wouldn't, and He told Isaiah all about it.

Isaiah 13:19-22, "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged."

The word of God was fulfilled in every detail, and today there's scarcely enough of the ruins left to mark the spot where it once stood the largest, richest, and proudest city of the ancient world. Friends, there is a God in heaven and His word can be trusted 100%! But here's the point of all this. If the prophecies we read about this morning are true, and obviously they are, then all the promises in God's word are also true.

When the Bible says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness", we can count on it. When it says, "He is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy", we can know that it's true. When it says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life", we can say praise God! And most importantly when it says Jesus is coming back to this earth to deliver His people, we know that it's going to happen. Let me read it to you from **John 14:1-3**. I committed these verses to memory many years ago and they have always been a comfort to me, and I hope they are to you. The apostle John wrote, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

This is our blessed hope, and I can hardly wait until these words are fulfilled, and they will be, just as surely as you're living and breathing and listening to my voice today. We've waited a long time for our Saviour's return, but even so, sure is the promise. A little longer and we'll be on our way to our promised forever home and Jesus will lead us beside the living stream that flows from the throne of God, and He'll explain all the trials we've passed through in order to perfect our characters for heaven, and whatever we've gone through will all be worth it, guaranteed! There we'll see the beauties of Eden restored and sing worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Oh! I hope you'll be there. It means everything for us to be there, and if you'll take God at His word and study the prophecies and by faith believe the promises, the precious promises, you can have the assurance of salvation and eternal life now, and immortality hereafter. May it be so in your life and in mine and in the lives of our loved ones without one missing.