

Remnant Life Church
May 28, 2017
The Need of a Nation
Memorial Day
Daniel 5

- Memorial Day in this country is always the last Monday of May and is the unofficial beginning of the summer season with Labor Day in September the unofficial end of the summer season.
- It began as a holiday to celebrate those in the northern army who had died in the Civil War
- Some sources state that the first was in 1868 and was known as Decoration Day
- Although southern states actually had a similar observance beginning in 1866 two years earlier
- By the early 1900's the competing days of honor from the north and south had merged into a single national day of commemorating those who had died in service for their country
- Not to be confused with Veterans Day to honor those serving; not those who have died
- Boalsburg, Pa (outside of State College) claims the title of the birthplace of Memorial Day claiming women's groups were decorating soldier's graves as early as July 4, 1864
- In 1966 President Lyndon Johnson declared Waterloo, NY as the official birthplace
- It was Lincoln's assassination and the end of the Civil War that created the first widespread memorial acts but the sheer number of those killed – over 600,000 - made it a daunting task that took time to gain footing
- Still, it quickly became an important reminder of our history as a nation
- One week after the Pearl Harbor attack in Dec 1941 President Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "Those who long enjoy such privileges that we enjoy forget in time that others have died to win them."
- It has been said many times that freedom is never really free; it's almost always bought with the blood of patriots.

- Of course war today is very different than it was back then
 - Today the reasons of war are not so clearly identified
 - The enemy takes on many faces and forms
 - The attacks are not confined to a particular geographic region
 - There are no more rules of engagement or innocents

- Our nation is in an on-going battle today but it is not confined to nations or groups who wish to physically harm us
- We are today in a battle for America's soul
 - Our nation is eroding from within and it has nothing to do with which party is in the White House or controls the halls of congress and the senate
 - It has been steadily taking place over time and it is getting worse

- Watch this - the position of decline we're in today is because of what we tolerated yesterday. And, the position we'll be in tomorrow will be because of what we are willing to tolerate today.
- The Book of Daniel is one filled with accounts and imagery that are still being debated today
 - He was one of the youths of Jerusalem captured and taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (**Dan 1:1-6**)
 - This took place around 605 BC
 - Book is in 2 distinct sections
 - The first 6 chapters are historical accounts written originally in Aramaic
 - The next 6 are visions and were written in Hebrew
 - Gives rise to the theory of 2 different authors or, at the very least, 2 different writers scribing the accounts given by Daniel
 - The pattern of the first half is consistent – an event, a response or reaction, the reader is pointed to God
- In **Daniel 5** we read about a culture dealing with a very similar path this country is following
- Babylon is where the prophet Daniel was living and active under first the Babylonian Kings Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar and then under Darius of the Medes.
- Like Joseph, God blessed Daniel in difficult surroundings because of his faithfulness
- What we read in **Daniel 5** is that the great nation of Babylon was overrun and conquered by the Medes and Persians
- The Babylonians made 4 great mistakes that allowed them to be captured and our nation is repeating them again today –

1. **They Lost all Sense of Remembrance (5:18-21)**

- a. Belshazzar forgot the lessons of the past
- b. His father Nebuchadnezzar said, *“Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?”* (**Dan 4:30**)
- c. His arrogance and pride forced him into a very difficult lesson in humility
- d. Belshazzar was headed down the same path
 - i. Pride ALWAYS leads to a fall
 - ii. Don't believe me? Lucifer, Adam and Eve, King David, Simon Peter
 - iii. Nebuchadnezzar finally learned that truth when he said, *“...those who walk in pride he is able to humble.”* (**4:37**)
- e. America used to worship and honor God openly and unashamedly
 - i. It is etched on the monuments
 - ii. Printed on our money
 - iii. We used to credit Him with our successes and turn to Him in our times of trial and need
 - iv. Yet we are slowly but surely trying to completely eradicate God from our present in spite of the blessings by God's hand in the past
 - v. Woodrow Wilson (28th President) served as President during WWI - *“A nation that does not remember what it was yesterday does not know what*

it is today, or what it is trying to do. We are about a futile thing if we do not know where we came from or what we have been about."

- f. What distinguished our nation from those to our north and south?
 - i. How was it that we became so powerful and so prosperous so quickly?
 - ii. Canada to the north was founded by the French looking for gold
 - iii. Mexico to the south was settled by Spanish explorers looking for gold
 - iv. America was settled by men and women primarily looking for God and the opportunity to worship Him freely
 - v. We are a long way from that desire
 - 1. Today courthouses are restricting worship
 - 2. Manger scenes are denied at Christmas time
 - 3. 10 commandments removed from federal buildings
- g. Just like Belshazzar and Babylon, a heavy and terrible cost will come to America for forgetting the past

2. **They Lost all Sense of Reality (5:1)**

- a. What you must know in order to understand this point is that while Belshazzar was partying the Medes and Persians had surrounded the city
- b. They believed that their history of rule and the sixty miles of walls around the city made them impenetrable
 - i. Pride leads to overconfidence which sets the stage for disaster
 - 1. They did not need to engage in a costly siege of the city
 - 2. Over time they diverted the Euphrates river which gave them a dry riverbed to simply walk under the city walls
 - ii. Belshazzar was too drunk and blinded by past success to see what the present was and what the future was bringing
 - iii. That very night he lost his life and his throne (5:30)
- c. Today our country is still, in many ways, living on the strength and prosperity of the 40's and 50's
 - i. We had played a prominent role in rebuilding Europe after WWII under the Marshall Plan
 - ii. Korea and Vietnam were in the future but they would begin to show the world that we were not invincible
 - iii. We then experienced the opulence and greed of the 80's
 - iv. Our pride then and still today continues to keep us from seeing the danger and destruction of this course
- d. Some foolishly believe that God needs America to accomplish His plans
 - i. There is no direct mention of America for the end times and it is very difficult to find even a vague reference that we play any role at all
 - ii. Other than as yet another example of what pride and removing God does to the fiber of a nation
 - iii. But our sense of reality, and the true condition of our nation, has been lost by our unwillingness to humble ourselves before God

3. **They Lost all Sense of Restraint (5:2)**

- a. With the loss of remembrance and reality comes the loss of self-control
- b. The Babylonians failed to see the connection between moral decay and national decay
 - i. This same thing happened to the Medes, the Romans, the Greeks, and it is happening here today
 - ii. And the pursuit of material gains and physical gratification erodes first the fabric of the home
- c. When men went off to fight in WWII women stepped into the workplace to fill the need
 - i. But when the war ended the women stayed in the work place instead of coming home and the standard of living and the cost to maintain it skyrocketed giving many families no choice but for both parents to work
- d. With no prominent role models in the home our children began to turn to other places
 - i. Hollywood
 - ii. TV
 - iii. Movies
 - iv. Professional athletes
 - v. Singers and musicians
 - vi. All of these pointing them to the hedonistic lifestyle of self-gratification, struggling now to find their true identity, and living with virtually no discipline
 - vii. Is this not what see every day being reported across this nation?
 - viii. The political climate and protests of the past 6 months

4. **The Lost all Sense of Respect (5:3-4)**

- a. With no restraint comes no respect
- b. Belshazzar brought in the sacred articles from the temple of God
 - i. Used them to worship false idols
 - ii. Blasphemy – flaunting himself before God to amuse the people
- c. **But then...**the Hand of God literally appeared to proclaim judgement
- d. Daniel is summoned - not to the party but to the judgement
- e. Daniel first preaches a quick three-point message to the King
 - i. First – power
 - Daniel reminded him that power only comes from God (5:18-19)
 - ii. Second – pride
 - He reminded the King what had happened to Nebuchadnezzar because of his pride (5:20)
 - iii. Third – punishment
 - He reminded him of the punishment God brought (5:21)
- f. He then takes what he just said and applies it to Belshazzar
 - i. He tells him he knows all about power, pride, and punishment but he has forgotten about remembrance, reality, restraint, and respect
 - ii. Like Babylon we have forgotten that our problems are not political, economic, or social

iii. They are rooted in spiritual and moral decay that produces the symptoms we see everyday

5. Of course, Daniel interpreted the words written on the wall

a. *Mene, mene, teikel, upharsin.* (5:25)

b. Numbered, weighed, separated

i. This was the word to the sinner then and it is still today – your days are numbered, judgment is coming, you will be separated from God

ii. **Daniel 5:30-31** – that night Belshazzar was overthrown by Darius the Mede

1. Why? Because God’s judgement is certain!

2. No wall, no past glory, no amount of military strength can stand against it

- How close are we to our judgement as a nation?
- For 241 years we have been a light that has shined to the world regarding freedom, the opportunity to build and succeed as well as the staging point for the Gospel to be spread around the world
- But, like Babylon, every nation has a last night
 - Make no mistake the days of this nation are numbered
 - But God is merciful and patient
 - If only 10 righteous men could have been found in 2 large cities God would have been willing to spare Sodom and Gomorrah (**Gen 18:32**)
- Our only hope as a nation is not to be found in the White House or the halls of Congress
 - It will only be found in our churches – our praying churches
- Nebuchadnezzar would not be restored until he acknowledge the “...*the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes.*” **Daniel 4:32**

II Chron 7:14 - *if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

Required

Humility

Prayer

Seeking God

Turning from evil ways/sin

Results

Forgiveness

Healing