

GODLY LIVING IN A GODLESS WORLD

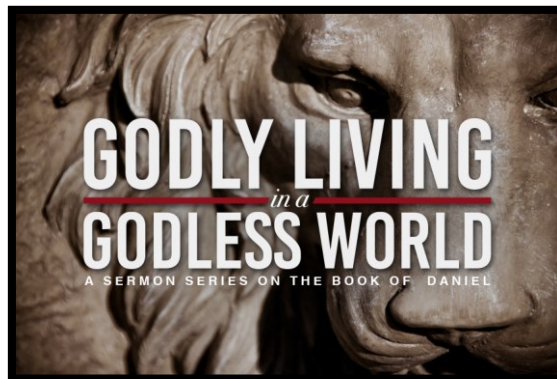
Expositional Study Of Daniel

Daniel 5:6-16

Written By

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In *Men in Black: How the Supreme Court is Destroying America*, by Mark Levin, Rush Limbaugh opens by attempting to wake the nation up regarding our current detrimental judicial trajectory and the ultimate need for reading this book in order to accomplish that purpose:

Liberal apologists for this kind of judicial tyranny glibly protest that the for the activist Supreme Court we would still be living in the dark ages on issues from slavery and civil rights. But it was the court that upheld slavery and segregation, setting back race relations in America for more than a century. Every time the court arrogates power that was properly left to the other branches, it chips away at our constitutional foundation. Every time the federal courts issue rulings over internal matters of the several states, they do lasting damage to our system of federalism--and thus to the rule of law and to our liberties. Besides, judicial activists have a very poor record. They are the ones responsible for upholding such detestable and unconstitutional practices as slavery and segregation. When a small group of men and women donning black robes make decisions beyond its authority, it is disenfranchising the will of the people, which is properly exercised through the people's duly elected representatives.

This trend must be reversed before it's too late.¹

¹Mark R. Levin, *How the Supreme Court is Destroying America* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery- Publishing, Inc.), xi.

What will happen when it's too late? A better question is, "What is happening as it is almost too late?"

- Constitutional rights of the majority will be, and are, overruled by the rights on a small judicial, politically driven minority.
- Balance of power within the government is, not will be, compromised and diluted, leaving power to push political agendas in the hands of a few unchecked people.
- The power of the States will be replaced by the power of the State, as they are persecuted and threatened with federal monies formerly designed to help their populaces. Really, we have not seen anything yet.
- Darkness and immorality is legislated in place of light and morality, resulting in societal chaos as the spiritual and moral backbone of the nation called Judeo-Christianity is broken.

If we continue on this twisted trajectory at Mach speed, the destination will be a land of godless and ruthless tyranny as misguided leaders will attempt to hold together the balkanized and beleaguered nation it has created in its bid for supreme, absolute power. Yes, when you remove the fence of law and replace it with lawlessness, and you deconstruct absolute moral standards founded upon natural and spiritual law, the cost one pays nationally and personally is always high.

How should we, as believers in the living God, respond? Where there is deconstruction, we should stand for construction. Where there is a godless offense, we should evidence a godly defense, and we should also go on the offensive when given the opportunity. We should also make sure we clearly understand the cost sin wreaks on nations and people by studying the price ancient Babylon paid for their flagrant disavowal of the living God. It is detailed in Daniel chapter 5, and the entire chapter resonates with one central theme we must restate for pedagogical purposes:

Unchecked Sinful Slides Are Costly—Nationally & Personally (Daniel 5:1-31)

As Babylon went down in national flames, seven steps describe her fatal flight. Wise people listen and learn from these concepts, and then commit to be the prophet Daniel, the voice of God in hopes of calling leaders and people out of their deadly descent.

What do you see as nations and people head toward crashing and burning at break-neck speed?

You'll Witness A Denial (Daniel 5:1)

This is the false notion, as articulated by King Belshazzar, that you are too powerful, crafty, shrewd, skilled, wealthy, educated, and so forth to crash. You just might need to wake up and smell the proverbial coffee as the ground is fast approaching your craft.

Second,

You'll Witness A Desecration (Daniel 5:2-4)

Sin spreads like a cancer, eating away at the good flesh. Sin is a contagion which spreads when not held in check by moral and spiritual law. You can always tell when it is arrogantly pushing forward into new territory because it will, by default, waste no time trashing and destroying anything, everything, and everyone associated with all which is moral, holy, and godly. You are currently watching this premise played out daily/weekly before your very eyes. Without any laws being passed in Maryland allowing a transgendered man to walk into a women's bathroom, a security guard of a local Giant store in D.C. is now facing assault charges for physically escorting the man out of the bathroom. Can you believe we are even having a discussion about this? Welcome to, in this instance, the outright desecration of God-designed sexuality/gender by our culture and our courts. Believe me, you have not seen anything yet for desecration only knows one thing: metastasization.

Third,

You'll Witness A Declaration (Daniel 5:5)

God is a tolerant God, but He's also holy. This logically means there is a limit to how long He will tolerate the desecration of that which is holy and is an open challenge to His holiness. In Noah's day, sin had so taken over society, resulting in sexual perversion of untold levels (Genesis 6:1-4) that God finally judged sin and rescued saints by sending a worldwide flood. Likening the future judgment of wicked mankind at His Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation, Jesus said it would be just like in the days of Noah when everyone was partying and enjoying their unchecked sinful lifestyles. Suddenly, He will appear in glory with the angels to execute judgment on sinners and sin (Matthew 24:36-51). Sinners should put down the beer mug, turn off the game at start paying attention to the fact that one day God says it's time to judge those who trashed spiritual truth and engaged in acts of gross immorality. King Belshazzar is one of those inebriated, party-boys who erroneously thought he could open and defiantly desecrate the holy goblets of God without any divine penalty. He thought wrong.

Suddenly the fingers of a man's hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing.

The opening prepositional phrase, *bah-sha'atah* (בה־שַׁעֲתָהּ) grammatically highlights the moment the living God broke into King Belshazzar's dimensionality to reveal to him that the party was over. Why was the party over? The King, like an arrogant strutting peacock, crossed a line of divine holiness. He had knowingly and defiantly touched and drank from the holy temple vessels of God, and he had challenged others to follow in his insurrection.

As the Babylonians drank themselves silly in the flickering candlelight of the captured menorah candlestick from the Temple,² God effortlessly entered our four dimensional world.

²This is most ironic. The very light the Babylonians used to illuminate their drunken party would be the light which would judge them. They failed to understand that divine light is never passive, but always dynamic. Jesus, later, would reveal Himself as the essence of all divine spiritual light (John 1:8-9; 3:19-22; 8:12; 9:5). This light always

Please take note of this. He who dwells in a dimensionality our finite, limited minds cannot even begin to fathom or comprehend even if explained to us from someone from the divine dimension, is this near to us at all times. This is both comforting and convicting. Comforting to those who know Him by faith for it underscores He is, indeed, with you as promised (Hebrews 13:5). It is convicting insofar as He, as the Judge, see, weighs, and will eventually bring you up on charges in His court of law (Revelation 20:12-15). We, therefore, see the height, depth, and width of our dimensionality, which exists within time, and wrongly assume this is all there is. Logic should teach of differently.

Consider the *Titan Themis*. It is touted to be the most powerful electron microscope in the world, allowing scientists to clearly view materials smaller than a nanometer, or a billionth of a meter. Imagine, to the naked eye these materials don't exist but they do within our dimensionality. All of this design, in my mind, naturally points to dimensional complexity beyond this dimension from the God who created dimensionality.

Silently the anthropomorphic fingers of God simply appeared floating in mid-air next a plaster wall near the king. Nobody heard any thunder. Nobody saw any lightening. Nobody heard angelic trumpets. Nobody saw any fire or smoke, like the Israelites did at the base of Mount Sinai. One by one, mouths dropped open and eyes popped as floating fingers of the living God started silently writing something on the wall in the flickering candlelight.

מִנָּא מִנָּא תִּקְל וּפְרָסִין

How ironic. They who lived for divine desecration were now awakened by divine revelation. God had seen and heard their godless activity and He had finally had enough.

Interestingly enough, over 3,000 years before, when Nimrod built a massive, lofty ziggurat in the same vicinity to deify mankind, the Godhead descended to check things out (Genesis 11:5). Once He had the evidence in hand that man, left to himself, worked to worship himself and his intellect and abilities, God confused their building venture by causing various people groups to speak different languages for the first time in human history. They rightly called the place, Babel (Genesis 11:9), which in Hebrew means “to confuse” (בְּבִל).³

leads either to divine judgment or deliverance/salvation (John 12:35-36, 46); however that direction is determined by the free-will choice of each person. What will you do with Jesus, the Christ?

³S. R. Driver and Charles A Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon*, ed. Francis Brown (Lafayette, Indiana: Associated Publishers and Authors, INC, 1981), בָּלַל S¹¹⁰¹ TWOT^{248, 248b} GK^{1176, 1177} **vb.** mingle, mix, confuse, confound (Arabic بَلَّلَ (*balla*) moisten (with water), cf. بَلَّلُ (*balalun*) moisture, Assyrian *balālu*, Dl⁷⁰; cf. Ph. בלל name of a sacrifice, & NH בָּלַל; Aramaic בַּלְבַּל (*balbel*))—**Qal** Pf. בָּלַל Gn 11:9, 92:11 (but cf. *infr.*); **Impf.** 1 pl. בָּלְלָה = בָּלְלָה Gn 11:7, cf. Kō. ³²⁵; Pt. pass. בָּלוּל Ex 29:40 + 3 times, בָּלוּלָה Lv 2:5 + 28 times, בָּלוּלָה Ex 29:2 + 4 times; — **1.** *mingle, confuse* (obj. שִׁפְהָ = speech, language, q.v.) Gn 11:7, 9 (J). **2.** *mix* (cakes or flour, etc. always with oil) sacrificial techn. term, only P, cf. Di on Lv 2:4; usually as מִנְחָה בִּשְׁמֵן, מִנְחָה בִּשְׁמֵן Ex 29:40; Lv 2:5; 14:10, 21; 23:13; Nu 7:13, 19, 25, 31, 37, 43, 49, 55, 61, 67, 73, 79; Nu 8:8; 15:4, 6, 9; 28:5, 9, 12⁰, 13, 20, 28; 29:3, 9, 14, בִּשְׂמֵן בִּשְׂמֵן Lv 7:10 (opp. חֲרֻבָה) 9:4, חֲלוּת בִּשְׂמֵן Ex 29:2; Lv 7:12⁰, i.e. made by mixing with oil; חֲלוּת בִּשְׂמֵן Lv 2:4, חֲלוּת בִּשְׂמֵן Nu 6:15, i.e. fine flour (in the form) of cakes so made. בָּלְלָה יִתְבַּלְלָה Ho 7:8; “אֶפְרַיִם בְּעַמִּים הוּא יִ” *Ephraim, among the peoples doth he mix himself*; but Ew Now derive here from בָּלַל = בָּלָה (or נָבַל) *waste away*, cf. Hiph. **Hiph.** *Impf.* בָּלְלָה Is 64:5 *and we faded away*, but read perhaps בָּלְלָה from נָבַל cf. Di (De, less probably, derives from בָּלַל—cf. Ew Now Ho 7:8—or בָּוַל = בָּוַל).

Now, thousands of years later in the same area, man, under the leadership of the most powerful king on the planet, was back at deifying man and desecrating the things and worship of God. Once more, God arrived to tell the partiers the party was over for them. He had finally had enough of their collective wickedness. Their sin had ripened them for divine judgment, as we shall see. And such is the course of sin. God, in His mercy and patience, gives people the freedom to either choose Him and His ways or to reject Him and embrace wickedness. Those who chose the latter typically live large in their sin, but that sin also becomes a fruit which ripens as it prepares itself for the judgmental harvest of God. As Joel states regarding the future battle in the Valley of Armageddon:

² Let the nations be aroused and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, For there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. ¹³ Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; the vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. ¹⁴ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision (Joel 3).

Divine judgment eventually comes from God because sin always reaches a ripened state if there is no repentance. Yes, God wants sinners to repent (Psalm 7:13; Jeremiah 18:8-10; Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15); however, if they *efface* Him, the only source of forgiveness and hope (“Of Him [Jesus] all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins,” Acts 10:43; “In Him [Jesus] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.”) and *embrace* their sin ... judgment will come in the most definitive fashion.

On a personal level this discussion should cause you to stop and take stock of your life. As you're thinking about your spiritual life and walk, or lack thereof, consider that the same divine fingers which informed Belshazzar he had finally crossed the line of all lines by worshipping the gods of gold, silver, bronze, wood, and stone ... these fingers had, some nine hundred years earlier written the Ten Commandments, giving mankind the ultimate parameters/boundaries for living for the living God. To observe them is to court life. To flaunt them is to embrace judgment.

Perhaps you, like Belshazzar, have thrown the faith of your grandfather to the wind, a faith founded upon the miraculous and wondrous work of God in his life. Perhaps you, like Belshazzar, are living large, engaging and enjoying all the fruits of sin for the moment. Perhaps you, like Belshazzar, think that you can desecrate holy things without paying any divine consequences. Perhaps you, like Belshazzar, trade immorality for morality without giving God's close presence to your life a thought. Perhaps you, like Belshazzar, have breached one of God's holy laws one too many times.

If so, I have a question. What has God done to wake you up, to get your attention before He comes in judgment? When did His hand, as it were, write on the wall of your life to stop you dead in your twisted tracks? Maybe you got a word of rebuke from a godly mother. Maybe a godly friend called you to task lest you crash and burn. Maybe this study serves as that divine moment where you realize you cannot live a life of unchecked humanistic sin forever. If this is you, then I counsel you do fulfill the words of Paul in Romans:

⁹ that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; ¹⁰for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. ¹¹For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed' (Romans 10).

Believe me, you will not be disappointed because the living God will not only cleanse your sin-stained soul, He'll give you a new spiritual life suited for living life to the fullest (John 10:10). So, will you be wise and turn to Him now that He has your undivided attention?

From what we learn from Christ's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, those destined for divine destruction are on a massive road full of people. The path to Paradise and life is narrow and populated by a chosen few (Matthew 7:13-14). What this tells us is a nations and peoples come face to face with a divine moment, most will do what we encounter in verses 6 through nine:

You'll Witness A Diversion (Daniel 5:6-9)

What kind of diversion? You'll encounter a diversion guiding you from the outright movement of God in your life. The diversion will be either caused by you, the demons in charge of keeping you in the spiritual dark, or both. Put differently, because God has arrested your attention in some fashion, you feel real uncomfortable and uneasy ... maybe even fearful. As one lady told me years ago, "Marty, don't talk to be about hell anymore. It bothers me and keeps me up at night." Her diversion was to simply verbally shut me down in her presence when and if she asked me spiritual questions. Belshazzar had one of the divine moments here. God seized his attention in a spectacular, ominous, scary fashion. How did he respond? The text is almost comical:

⁶Then the king's face grew pale, and his thoughts alarmed him; and his hip joints went slack, and his knees began knocking together.

Ever been so scared you felt like this? Isn't this most instructive. How quickly the arrogant king went from trashing the sacred things of God in his drunken stupor to realizing there was a God watching and listening to his every move. No sooner did he see the floating fingers than his body started to shut down and shake in uncontrollable fear.

Fear heads in two directions in your brain. Spooky, scary data enters through visual, olfactory (nose), audible, or tactile areas of your body and it can head straight for the amygdala part of your brain, which is really centrally located. From here messages can be sent directly to other parts of your body letting it know something threatening is possibly occurring. The result is always the same: sweaty palms, rapid heartbeat, increased blood pressure and so forth.

The high road of fear is addressed consciously as opposed to unconsciously. Data enters through the eyes, the nose, the ears, and/or through the skin and heads straight for the *Thalamus*, which is located just above the *Amygdala*. Here the sights and sounds and so forth are broken down for volume and dissonance, and then a message is sent to the large cortex, which forms the major surface of your brain. Here raw sights and sounds are given meaning, enabling the brain to determine if there is a threat or not. From here, information is passed to the *Amygdala*, the emotional core of the brain. At this location, the information is tagged and given its fear value if this is warranted based on the brain's analysis. Passing from here, the information goes up the

short distance to the *Bed nucleus of the stria terminalis* where the initial burst of fear from the *Amygdala* is given more life. From here the info travels to the *Locus ceruleus*, located just beneath the *Amygdala*. Once here, the body is activated for fear: hair raising on the back of the neck, knees knocking, digestive shut down, stress hormone release and so forth. When the event is over it is stored in the *Hippocampus*, located just above the *Locus ceruleus*.⁴

Don't you know ol' King Belshazzar, in his inebriated state, took this high road as his eyes caught sight of the floating fingers? As the visual stimuli entered his brain, I'm sure it wasted no time heading through all of these processes, resulting in *Locus ceruleus* going haywire with FEAR. At this point Belshazzar had two distinct options: turn to God or turn away from God. You can guess which option the party animal chose.

I find Belshazzar's response most interesting. Read on and you'll see what I mean:

⁷ The king called aloud to bring in the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners. The king spoke and said to the wise men of Babylon, "Any man who can read this inscription and explain its interpretation to me will be clothed with purple, and have a necklace of gold around his neck, and have authority as third ruler in the kingdom."

His grandfather, the great King Nebuchadnezzar, had his wicked world rocked by the living God on several occasions in spectacular, inexplicable ways. First, there was the spooky dream of the massive metallic image (Daniel 2:1-3). Then there was the dream about the massive tree which was suddenly cut down to the ground (Daniel 4). In both of these divinely appointed events designed to get his attention, his first reaction was to seek wisdom, guidance, and insight from his soothsayers, diviners, and magicians, you know, the men with supposedly supernatural knowledge. In both of these divinely appointed events, the king learned that true understanding could only come from the living God as spoken in and through Daniel, the believer in the living God (Daniel 2:24ff; 4:19). Or to put it differently, the godless man could only understand the spiritual realm by speaking with a man of God, a Christian, connected with the God of that realm. That man, at this point in time and history, was Daniel.

Unfortunately, Belshazzar picked up the old, unproven, and unsuccessful sinful habits of his grandfather when confronted with the divine event. Instead of turning to God, which he should have known about from the faith story of his grandfather, the selfish, arrogant, sinful king turned to the same men who never had the answers to metaphysical/spiritual questions in the first place ... and never would. And just as his grandfather has done, though unsuccessfully, he sought to bribe them with power and prestige. It was a hollow offer from a hollow man.

Daniel tells us what happened next:

⁸ Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the inscription or make known its interpretation to the king. ⁹Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, his face grew even paler, and his nobles were perplexed.

⁴Joe Lertola, "The Anatomy of Anxiety," Time Magazine, January 10, 2002, accessed May 19, 2016, <http://palousemindfulness.com/docs/anatomy-of-anxiety.pdf>.

One more time, the finest, most educated minds could not figure out what the living God was saying. Why couldn't they? The letters could have been arranged in a vertical fashion, thus forming an anagram of sorts. It's also true that the non-believers do not grasp the spiritual communications of God anyway. Paul talks about this in his letters to the Corinthians:

³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God (2 Corinthians 4).

The godless are inept with spiritual truth because of divine blinding. Got it. To this Paul adds this insight in his first letter to the Corinthians:

¹⁴ But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. ¹⁵ But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. ¹⁶ For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2).

When a person is rightly related to God by faith in Christ, he has the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 12:13), and that Spirit is the one who opens up the meaning of the Word of God and spiritual matters (1 John 2:20). Ol' Belshazzar just had ol' Belshazzar, sin and all. Because of this sinful status, he and his godless counselors could not understand the divine message, no matter how hard they tried. To them it appeared as mere gibberish and foolishness.

All of this leads me to ask a personal question, "What godless person or persons are you turning to for wisdom and insight into your life after a major God-event?" You have got to stop doing this if you want to find answers to the questions you have encountered from God writing on the wall of your lose life. Remember ol' Nicodemus, a leader of the Pharisees in the time of Christ? He didn't find rest for his soul until he came to Christ secretly at night and asked him his most perplexing spiritual questions. From what we know of his story as recounted in the Gospel of John, he, of all people, traded spiritual death for spiritual life because he's pictured helping Joseph of Arimathea prepare Christ's body for burial (John 19:39). This is what should happen individually.

But what does this passage say to us nationally? It tells us there is time when God's patience wears thin regarding our sin, when our sin is ripe. It tells us there are times when God writes His words of coming judgment on the wall for all sinners to see. How does God write on the wall today?

- When you stand for consecration and not desecration, God writes.
- When you speak up for holiness, God writes.
- When you warn the godless how their twisted decisions will arouse the judgment of God, God writes.
- When you preach and teach the unadulterated, unmodified, un-watered down Word of God, God writes.
- When you oppose the advance of outright evil in your school, at your job, and so forth, God writes.

- When you write a paper defending biblical and moral truth, God writes.
- When you show the godless how their moral current trajectory will cause them to crash and burn eventually, God writes.

I'd dare say it's time to start writing.