

THE GOSPEL IN THE ACADEMIC AND POLITICAL WORLD

GOLDEN TEXT

“My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power” (1 Corinthians 2:4,5).

USEFUL PRACTICE

Only the Gospel of Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to destroy the strongholds and the resistance of the academic realm and the political world.

SCRIPTURE READING Daniel 2:24-28

²⁴ Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, “Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him.”

²⁵ Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, “I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.”

²⁶ The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), “Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?”

²⁷ Daniel replied, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,

²⁸ but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To show that we need to reach with the Good News.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- I To understand** that Daniel made a difference at the Babylonian University.
- II. To raise awareness** that Daniel and his friends knew how to highlight the sovereignty of the only true God in the Babylonian Academy.
- III. To explain** God's intervention in the Babylonian politics.

INTRODUCTION

Evangelization in universities should also be a top priority for the church, because out of the academic world come scientists, educators, opinion makers and most of the rulers and legislators. It is up to us, therefore, to properly prepare our brothers and sisters in Christ, so that, on campus, they can act as Jesus Christ's real witnesses. Only in this way will we have a country that is fairer and committed to Christian Ethics. In this lesson, we will see the example of Daniel and his three companions. Exiled in Babylon, they stood out as scholars, civil servants and politicians. They showed, through words and deeds, the supremacy of the God of Israel. The life of these Hebrews serves as an example to Christian scholars and politicians, who struggle to take the Gospel into the highest spheres of knowledge and power.

I - DANIEL AT THE BABYLONIAN UNIVERSITY

In Babylon, Daniel and his three companions were re-educated on the language and culture of the Chaldeans (Dn 1:4). But they never gave up their fear of God, which is the beginning of all wisdom (Prov 1:7).

1. A testimonial life. Even before they were enrolled at the Babylonian university, they firmly resolved in their heart not to defile themselves with the Chaldean culture (Dn 1:8). Their aim was not to destroy it, but to transform it through a holy and testimonial posture. Later, they got to influence even the political class of the empire. Believers should be guided to also testify about Christ on campus. First, the Christian university student evangelizes through a holy and blameless testimony, which is a message in itself. And also, through a wise and timely approach that may show the reason for our hope (1 Pet 3:15). No Christian

university student must sacrifice the Gospel on the postmodernity altar. Rather, let him/her be helpful in the proclamation of Christ.

2. A testimonial academic career. Let us encourage our sisters and brothers to excel in academic excellence. If they have mediocre performances, how can they demonstrate that the love of Christ leads to true wisdom? Take the example of Daniel and his companions. They graduated with highest honors: "In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanterers in his whole kingdom" (Dn 1:20). Academic mediocrity goes against the Gospel. A believer who loves Christ also worships him with his/her grades, undergraduate degrees, master's degrees and doctor's degrees.

3. A testimonial career. Daniel and his three companions were immediately integrated into the cultural and scientific elite of Babylon. And in that position, Daniel would stay for more than 70 years (Daniel 1:21). Jesus needs witnesses in all areas of human knowledge. He also died for scientists, doctors, lawyers, sociologists and educators. If we properly prepare believers, we will take Christ into the cultural elite of our nation and the world. Therefore, let's train the believers to form, on campus, prayer groups, Bible study and evangelism. From these nuclei, God shall raise up compelling witnesses of his Word. The Gospel of Christ cannot be away from the cultured areas.

II - GOD IN THE BABYLONIAN ACADEMY

Daniel and his three companions were in the service of a ruler who was completely unaware of the divine sovereignty. However, at a critical moment, they knew how to highlight the sovereignty of the One True God.

1. The eschatological crisis. King Nebuchadnezzar was concerned about the future of his empire, when God showed him, in a dream, the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. As none of his magicians or astrologers was able to interpret his dream, he decreed the death of the intellectual elite of Babylon (Dn 2:5). The Babylonian academy was useless at that time. Similar crises challenge Christian scholars in various fields of knowledge. For this reason, they must be grounded in the Word of God, in order to show the Gospel of Christ as the only solution to all human problems.

2. The theological and evangelical response. At that time of crisis, and before his own death, Daniel boldly presents the divine answer: "But there

is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come [...]" (Daniel 2:28). And this way, the prophet made known to Nebuchadnezzar God's program for the last days. Only the Gospel of Christ can answer the questions that so much afflict mankind. Take therefore the current crisis to proclaim to everyone, including wise and powerful people, that only Christ can rescue the current society from a ruin that is certain and foretold.

III - GOD'S INTERVENTION IN THE BABYLONIAN POLITICS

Daniel was already quite old when he was called to manage the worst crisis in the Babylonian Empire. At that moment, he could not be politically correct. So he boldly proclaimed God's judgment upon the kingdom of Belshazzar.

1. The corruption of Babylon. Although Nebuchadnezzar had recognized God's lordship on three occasions, his son Belshazzar, in replacing him, did not take long to bring the empire to ruin. In a night of orgy and insults against the God of Israel, he desecrated the holy utensils of the Holy Temple in the presence of their wives, concubines and nobles (Dn 5:1-3). At that very moment, the Lord wrote on the wall of the palace, the death sentence of that kingdom. The same thing happens in Brazil. God is demanding from his people a more evangelical, holier and more decisive attitude, holy (2 Chronicles 7:14).

2. Daniel, the incorruptible one. As no Babylonian scholars were able to read the divine sentence written on the wall, the old prophet's name was evoked. Once in the presence of the king, and rejecting all the gifts and treats that he had offered him, Daniel read the sentence (Dn 5:25-31). Again, he did not allow himself to be ensnared by the charm of the politically correct thing. In interpreting the inscription, he strongly rebuked the monarch. May Christian public men not evade their duty! May we, in this time of economic and political crisis that debilitates Brazil, announce that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life and that blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord! Rulers, legislators and judges also need to hear that Jesus saves, heals, baptizes with the Holy Spirit, and will soon come for us.

CONCLUSION

May the leaders know how to prepare those who will attend a university! Like Daniel and his companions, they will be able to make a big difference in the academic world and in the political sphere. The Lord Jesus needs believers in all walks of life.