



SUSANNA

DANIEL 13

Domenichino

Susanna and the Elders, 1603

THE SETTING:

- **BABYLON DURING THE EXILE-** DANIEL WAS A YOUNG BOY AT THIS TIME (VS 45) (~605-581BC)
- MOST OF THE STORY TAKES PLACE AT THE HOME OF SUSANNA'S WEALTHY HUSBAND OR IN THEIR GARDENS.



THE CHARACTERS: SUSANNA

- SUSANNA- HER NAME MEANS “LILY”
- BEAUTIFUL AND GOD-FEARING (VS 2)
- MARRIED TO JOAKIM (VS 1), DAUGHTER OF HILKIAH
- RAISED JEWISH BY PIOUS PARENTS ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF MOSES. (VS 3)
- SHE HAD MAIDS AND ATTENDANTS , HER HUSBAND WAS WEALTHY AND RESPECTED. (VS 4, 15)
- SHE WAS A MOTHER. (VS 30)





Susanna at Her Bath, 1526,
Albrecht Altdorfer

THE CHARACTERS: THE 2 JUDGES

THE 2 ELDERS WERE APPOINTED TO SERVE AS JUDGES IN THE COMMUNITY (VS 5)

THERE WAS A PROPHECY ABOUT THESE JUDGES (VS 5) :

*THE LORD SAID, “**LAWLESSNESS HAS COME OUT OF BABYLON, THAT IS, FROM THE ELDERS WHO WERE TO GOVERN THE PEOPLE AS JUDGES.**”*

THE ROLE OF JUDGES IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

- TO HELP TO SOLVE DISPUTES BY MEANS OF ARBITRATION AND ADJUSTMENT.
- TO CALL UPON JEWISH LAW AND ETHICAL TEACHING IN MAKING DECISIONS.
- TO CONTAIN DISPUTES INVOLVING MEMBERS OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AND TO AVOID RECOURSE TO THE CIVIL/FOREIGN COURTS.

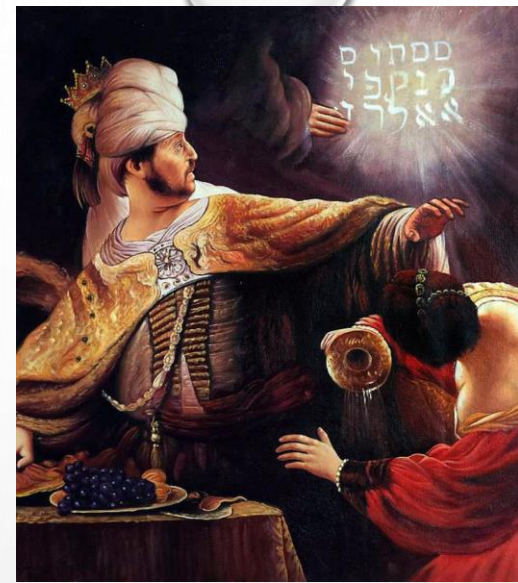
THE BOOK OF JUDGES: AN EARLIER TIME



- THE EVENTS DESCRIBED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT **BOOK OF JUDGES** COVERS TIME FROM AROUND 1400 B.C. TO 1040 B.C.
- THIS WAS A TIME **BEFORE** THE FIRST KING OF ISRAEL.
- THESE JUDGES WERE MILITARY LEADERS, AND SOMETIMES PROPHETS.
- THEY WERE CHOSEN BY GOD TO RESCUE THEIR PEOPLE AND ESTABLISH JUSTICE.

WHAT CAUSED THE FALL FROM FAITH FOR THESE ELDERS?

- WAS IT THE INFLUENCE OF **BABYLONIAN CULTURE**? RECALL DANIEL 5 AND THE PARTY HELD BY KING BELSHAZZAR.....
- WAS IT THE FALSE BELIEF THAT THE GOD OF ISRAEL WAS ONLY **IN ISRAEL**?
- RECALL THE STORY FROM **2 KINGS 5** WHERE NAAMAN IS CURED OF LEPROSY BY ELISHA. NAAMAN WAS A FOREIGNER AND WISHED TO WORSHIP YHWH IN HIS OWN LAND. HE ASKED IF HE MIGHT TAKE TWO MULE-LOADS OF EARTH WITH HIM SO HE COULD WORSHIP ON ISRAELI SOIL...
- 2 KINGS 5:17



WAS IT POWER, PRIDE, LUST, OR A COMBINATION OF ALL OF THESE?

- POWER TENDS TO CORRUPT AND ABSOLUTE POWER CORRUPTS ABSOLUTELY. (LORD ASTON)
- WITH **PRIDE** ONE PUTS THEIR OWN NEEDS AND DESIRES BEFORE ALL OTHERS. IN THE CULTURE OF BELSHAZZAR AND NEBUCHADNEZZAR, THERE WAS A BELIEF IN ENTITLEMENT AND PRIVILEGE FOR THOSE IN POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY OR POWER.
- ?? WHEN IN BABYLON DO AS THE BABYLONIANS DO?????

DEFINING OUR TERMS

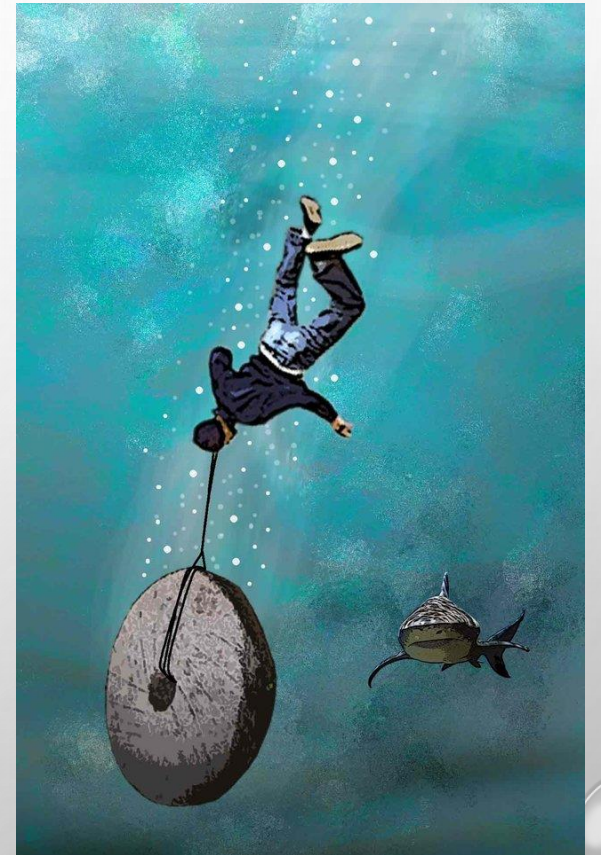
- WHAT IS LUST? IT IS A STRONG DESIRE, NEED OR SEXUAL URGE. TO LUST IS **TO COVET**.
- HERE THE SIN OF LUST IS NOT CONTROLLED AND LEADS TO TRICKERY, DECEIT, INTENTION TO COMMIT ADULTERY OR A POSSIBLE RAPE AND BLACKMAIL.
- WHAT IS THE SLIPPERY SLOPE? ONCE GIVING IN TO SIN, THE SECOND TIME IT IS EASIER TO SIN AND IT MAY BECOME HABIT WITH DIRE CONSEQUENCES. THE FIRST SMALL SIN MAY LEAD TO GREATER SINS THAT DAMAGE OUR CHARACTER.

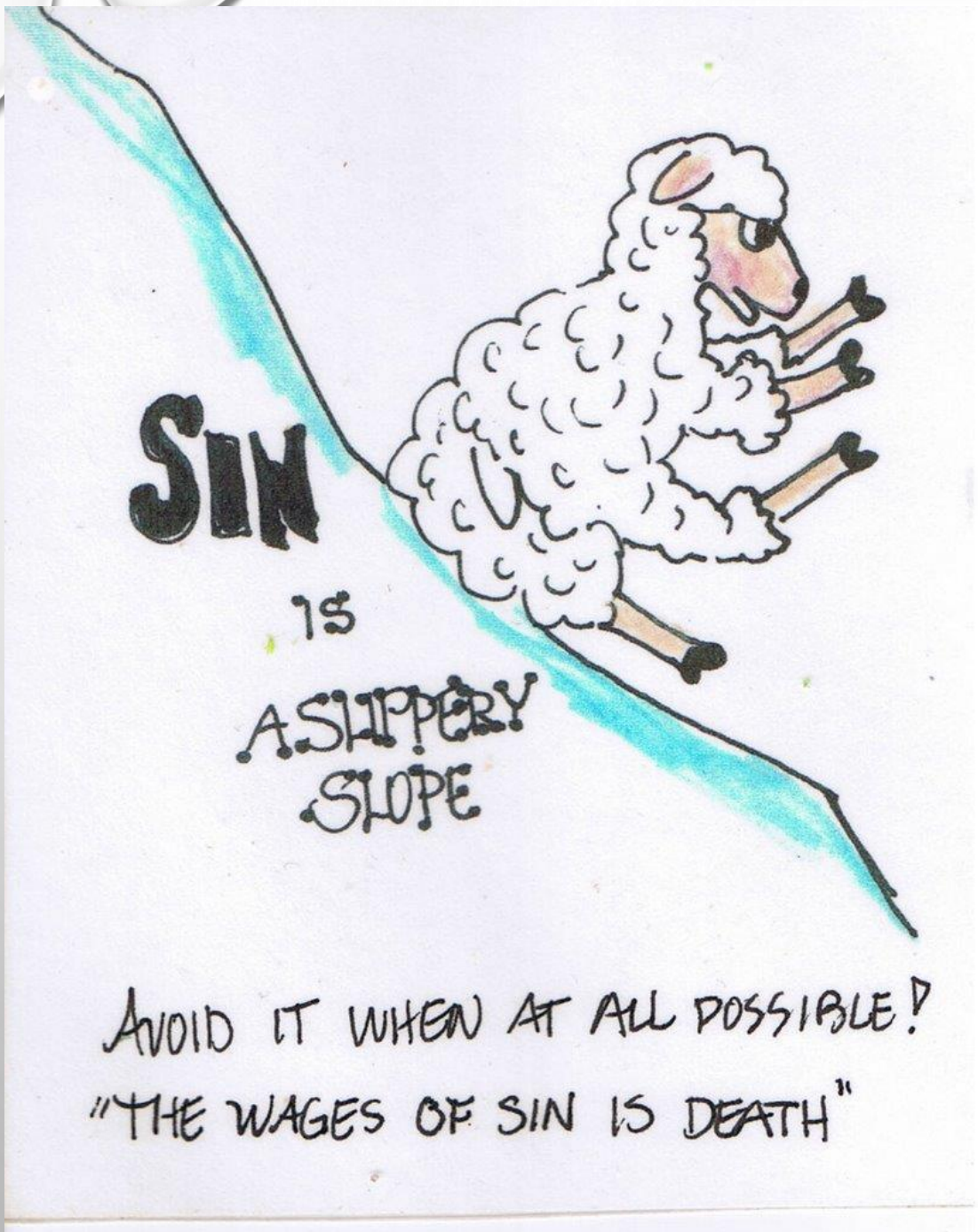
PAUL'S TEACHING: EPH 14:17-24

¹⁷ So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. ²⁰ That, however, is not the way of life you learned ²¹ when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

JESUS' TEACHING ON LEADING OTHERS TO SIN

- LUKE 17:2 IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR HIM IF A MILLSTONE WERE HUNG AROUND HIS NECK AND HE WERE THROWN INTO THE SEA, THAN THAT HE WOULD CAUSE ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES TO STUMBLE.





Romans 6:23

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

THE LORD CALLED THE TWO JUDGES “**LAWLESS**”

- WHICH LAWS WERE THEY BREAKING?
- **MOSAIC LAW : EXODUS 20 THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**
- ¹⁴ “YOU SHALL NOT **COMMIT ADULTERY.**”
- ¹⁶ “YOU SHALL NOT **GIVE FALSE TESTIMONY** AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR.
- ¹⁷ “YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR’S HOUSE. YOU SHALL NOT **COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR’S WIFE**, OR HIS MALE OR FEMALE SERVANT, HIS OX OR DONKEY, OR ANYTHING THAT BELONGS TO YOUR NEIGHBOR.”

THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS: THE PLOT

- THE JUDGES MEET REGULARLY AT THE HOME OF JOAKIM – HE IS A SOURCE THEY USE TO HELP WITH DECIDING DIFFICULT CASES.
- GOD HAD DECLARED THEM LAWLESS
- THE JUDGES SEE THE BEAUTIFUL SUSANNA AT JOAKIM'S HOUSE
- BOTH LUST AFTER HER AND PLOT TO HAVE HER LIE WITH THEM OUT OF FEAR OF CONSEQUENCES IF SHE DOES NOT. THEY WOULD ACCUSE HER OF ADULTERY WITH ANOTHER MAN.
- SUSANNA REFUSES FOR MORAL AND RELIGIOUS REASONS. SHE SCREAMS, AND SO DO THE JUDGES. **DEUT. 22:24** STATES THAT IF A WOMAN WHO IS RAPED DOES NOT CRY OUT, HER ACCUSATION OF RAPE WILL NOT BE BELIEVED.
- THE JUDGES OPEN THE GATE AND CLAIM THEY CAUGHT SUSANNA WITH A¹⁵ YOUNG MAN WHO LEFT THE SCENE.

THE PLOT THICKENS



- THE NEXT DAY THE JUDGES AND OTHERS COME “FULLY DETERMINED TO PUT SUSANNA TO DEATH” (VS 28)
- SUSANNA EMERGES WITH HER PARENTS, CHILDREN AND RELATIVES.
- THEY ALL LISTEN TO THE FALSE TESTIMONY OF THE JUDGES.
- SUSANNA PRAYS. THE LORD HEARD HER PRAYER. AS SHE IS BEING LED TO EXECUTION “THE HOLY SPIRIT OF A YOUNG BOY” SPOKE UP CONDEMNING THE ACTIONS WITHOUT “CLEAR EVIDENCE”. THIS WAS OUR HERO, DANIEL.

DANIEL PLANS TO FIND THE TRUTH

- THE ELDERS SAID TO DANIEL, **“COME SIT WITH US AND INFORM US, SINCE GOD HAS GIVEN YOU THE PRESTIGE OF OLD AGE.”**
- DANIEL EXPLAINS THAT THEY SHOULD SEPARATE THE TWO JUDGES AND LISTEN TO THEIR TESTIMONY SEPARATELY .
- HE ASKS EACH UNDER WHICH TREE DID THIS HAPPEN. THEY WERE CAUGHT IN THEIR LIES. ONE CLAIMED THIS HAPPENED UNDER A MASTIC TREE AND THE OTHER SAID IT WAS UNDER AN OAK.
- DANIEL SAID “THE ANGEL OF GOD WAITS WITH A SWORD TO CUT YOU IN TWO SO AS TO MAKE AN END OF YOU BOTH.” (VS 59)

CONCLUSION OF THE STORY

- THEIR FATE WAS TO BE THAT WHICH THEY HAD PLANNED FOR SUSANNA.
- ACCORDING TO **DEUT. 19:18-19**, IF WITNESSES LIE, THEY WILL SUFFER THE PUNISHMENT THAT THE ACCUSED WOULD HAVE SUFFERED HAD THE TESTIMONY BEEN UPHELD.
- DANIEL HAD CONVICTED THEM OF PERJURY.
- DANIEL WAS GREATLY ESTEEMED BY THE PEOPLE. (VS 64)

THE CHARACTER OF DANIEL

- AN “IDEAL ACTIVIST INTERCESSOR”.
- WISE BEYOND HIS YEARS.
- HE IS BOLD AND NOT AFRAID TO RALLY AGAINST THE CROWD WHEN THEY ARE WRONG.
- THE SPIRIT OF GOD WAS WITH HIM
- IN A GREEK TRANSLATION CALLED THE THEODOTION TEXT, THIS STORY WAS PLACED AT THE BEGINNING OF DANIEL AS AN INTRODUCTION.

DANIEL AND JESUS BOTH BLESSED WITH WISDOM IN THEIR YOUTH



- LUKE 2:46-47
- AFTER THREE DAYS THEY FOUND HIM IN THE TEMPLE, SITTING IN THE MIDST OF THE TEACHERS, LISTENING TO THEM AND ASKING THEM QUESTIONS, ⁴⁷ AND ALL WHO HEARD HIM WERE ASTOUNDED AT HIS UNDERSTANDING AND HIS ANSWERS.

THE CHARACTER OF SUSANNA

- SHE IS AN IDEAL WOMAN: SHE IS BEAUTIFUL, SMART AND SHE FOLLOWS THE LAW OF MOSES.
- SHE IS SMART ENOUGH THAT THERE WAS NO EASY WAY TO ESCAPE HER DILEMMA. IT IS BEST TO FOLLOW ONE'S CONSCIOUS AND GOD'S LAW. **““IF I YIELD, IT WILL BE MY DEATH; IF I REFUSE, I CANNOT ESCAPE YOUR POWER. ²³ YET IT IS BETTER FOR ME NOT TO DO IT AND TO FALL INTO YOUR POWER THAN TO SIN BEFORE THE LORD.”**
- WHEN DESPERATE SHE PRAYS-

THE CHARACTER OF THE JUDGES

- IT IS AMAZING THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY HAVE FALLEN INTO EVIL WAYS.
- THEY KNOW THE LAW, SO THEY CREATE A PLAN THAT THEY HAD HOPED WOULD PROTECT THEM FROM BEING EXECUTED FOR ADULTERY.
- THEIR PRIDE MAKES THEM FEEL SECURE THAT THEY WOULD BE BELIEVED IF THEY TESTIFIED FALSELY.

THE MORAL LESSONS



- **PUT YOUR FAITH IN THE LORD AT ALL TIMES. THIS IS YOUR MORAL COMPASS.**
- **GOD HEARS OUR PRAYERS. WHEN IN TROUBLE BY ALL MEANS PRAY! PRAYER STIRS GOD INTO ACTION.**
- **IT IS ESSENTIAL TO DISCERN THE MESSAGE OF POPULAR CULTURE. IF IT GOES AGAINST THE LAWS OF GOD OR THE LAWS OF LOVE, GOING ALONG WITH IT CAN LEAD YOU DOWN THAT SLIPPERY SLOPE.**

LET US PRAY

- LORD GOD,
WE COME BEFORE YOU,
AND DESIRE THAT OUR LIVES TO BE LIKE AN OPEN BOOK.
COME WRITE YOUR STORY OF LOVE ACROSS EVERY PAGE,
MAY WE HEAR YOUR VOICE OF GUIDANCE IN ALL WE DO.
WE TRUST THAT WITH YOU WE WILL ALWAYS SEE THE WAY AHEAD,
MAY OUR EVERY MOVE BE AT ONE WITH YOUR WILL.
WE KNOW THAT YOU PROTECT US, AND KEEP US AS WE TRAVEL.
COME REVEAL TO US ALL THAT WE NEED TO SEE ALONG THE WAY,
AS WE JOURNEY ON THIS INCREDIBLE ADVENTURE WITH YOU.

AMEN.