

CAPITOL STUDIES

FEBRUARY 21, 2024 • WEEK 7



DANIEL:
CHRIST'S CIVIL
SERVANT IN
BABYLON

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Verse of the Week

Daniel 6:22

My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime.

The Courage of Daniel



EVERY FEW YEARS WHILE IN D.C., I go with a group to the National Cathedral where we view, among other things, a moving statue of Abraham Lincoln poised on his knees in prayer. The statue represents a type of moral leadership that is needed in every generation... especially in turbulent times. The really great leaders in our world's history have been praying leaders. — Chaplain Michael Sprague

I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day. — Abraham Lincoln¹

In a day of political intrigue, governmental embezzlement, and credibility gaps, it is refreshing to review the integrity of Daniel, whose only faults were a consistent prayer life, a godly lifestyle, and conscientious business dealings. Daniel by now was an old man, long overdue for retirement; a true octogenarian, he was seemingly all alone in a corrupt culture and court. He was hated by associates and under continual surveillance.

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INTRODUCTION

This sixth chapter of Daniel proceeds from the “gold” empire of Nebuchadnezzar to the “silver” empire of the Medes and Persians, fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel 2. Silver is inferior to gold, and the kingdom of the Medes and Persians was inferior to the kingdom of Babylon, particularly in authority and control. Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar worshipped and honored many gods; Darius made himself a god. The deification of man, in blasphemy of the one true God, will continue to be the defining characteristic of “the times of the Gentiles” through all the remaining empires indicated in Daniel 2.

The most important part of a believer’s life is the part that only God sees, the daily private time of meditation and prayer. “‘You pray as your face is set,’ said British theologian P. T. Forsythe, ‘towards Jerusalem or Babylon.’ Most of the world begins the day looking toward the world and hoping to get something from it, but the Christian believer looks to the Lord and His promises and enters each new day by faith. Outlook determines outcome, and when we look to the Lord for His guidance and help each day, we know that the outcome is in His hands and that we have nothing to fear. ‘Real true faith is man’s weakness leaning on God’s strength,’ said D. L. Moody, and we might add, man’s weakness transformed into God’s strength.”²

I. THE PROMINENCE OF DANIEL

Daniel 6:1-3

It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom,² and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one), that these satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss.³ Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom.³

Darius the Mede advanced the aged Daniel to a very prominent and influential position in the Persian government. The king’s first move was to divide the conquered territory among 120 princes who were responsible to three presidents, Daniel being one of them. We are not informed about what led to Daniel’s promotion, but we may surmise that his long familiarity with administration and his personal ability would be valuable assets to the new regime. Daniel was trustworthy and a person of great integrity and so was attractive to a king who needed such a person. He was “extraordinary” or excellent in spirit.

Many individuals of advanced age have been influential in their times. “When 83, [William Ewart] Gladstone, for the fourth time, became Prime Minister of Great Britain. Michelangelo, at 89, executed his *Last Judgment*, perhaps the most famous single picture in the world. John Wesley preached with almost undiminished eloquence at 88, closing at that remarkable age, the most remarkable career of his time, having traveled a quarter of a million miles... [and] delivered, someone



estimated, 4,000 sermons, and written volumes and volumes of books. When they burned Polycarp... at the stake in Smyrna in A.D. 155, he had been a Christian for 86 years. Before they lit the fire... he said, 'Eighty-six years have I served [God]. He's never done me any harm. Why should I forsake Him now?' ...Edison was inventing at 90. [Frank Lloyd] Wright, at 90, was considered a creative architect. [George Bernard] Shaw was writing plays at 90. Grandma Moses was painting at 80. J.C. Penney, the great Christian, was working strenuously at his desk at 95."⁴ No matter what age we are, God wants to use us. Let's keep running the race and finish strong like Daniel. He was, without question, the finest statesman in the entire Medo-Persian Empire, as he had been the finest statesman in the Babylonian Empire, as he perhaps is the finest statesman who ever walked on the face of the earth.

"Daniel was outnumbered 122 to 1. He was a roadblock to the riches and ease that a government (tax-funded) lifestyle could afford. With Daniel around, there were no special favors, no special interest groups, and no private funding under the table. Accountability is essential, even in a pagan world. The princes were accountable to the presidents who were accountable to Daniel who was accountable to Darius who (whether he knew it or not) was accountable to God."⁵

II. THE PLOT OF THE LEADERS

Daniel 6:4-5

Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him. ⁵Then these men said, "We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God."

"What a magnificent testimony Daniel had before and among the unsaved! Daniel was as near perfect as a child of Adam's race could ever be. Toward the beginning of the story of God's dealings with men, we find a near-perfect man, Joseph by name. He, too, was a captive in a foreign land. He, too, was an interpreter of dreams. He, too, was what came to be called, in more recent times, 'a court Jew.' ...Both Joseph and Daniel were envied and hated because of their unimpeachable integrity in both their personal and their public lives. The world has cause to be grateful to such men."⁶

Daniel 6:6-9

Then these commissioners and satraps came by agreement to the king and spoke to him as follows: "King Darius, live forever! ⁷All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den. ⁸Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law





of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked.”⁹Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction.

Note the elements of antisemitism in these verses. The elevation of this Jew to such heights of service and honor probably won him the hatred of envious politicians who determined to bring an indictment against the prophet and man of God and thus remove him from office. Daniel’s private and public lives were flawless. They could find nothing against him. Darius was soon to learn that Daniel was no ordinary man, that he was unbending in his convictions. Yet, he was the king’s favorite. Daniel had an excellent spirit, for without doubt he was so yielded to God that the Holy Spirit prompted these virtues in Daniel (Num. 27:18). Daniel was loyal to the empire, and there were no irregularities in his dealings. He must have been a person of extraordinary wisdom and strength.

Appealing to Darius’ vanity and implying that Darius himself was a god, the conspirators talked the king into passing a law forbidding prayers to any other god for a period of thirty days. They counted on Daniel defying the irrevocable Persian decree, and they were not disappointed.

III. THE PRAYER OF DANIEL

Daniel 6:10-11

Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.¹¹ Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God.

Daniel did not try to hide or change his routine. With windows open as was his custom, Daniel faced toward Jerusalem and knelt in prayer to his God three times a day. Petition and gratitude were the main elements of his prayer. He doubtless prayed *for* the king, not *to* the king. This daily habit was the enemy’s evidence to convict Daniel. Would our lives produce enough evidence of prayer to convict us? Remember, we are not restricted to praying on our knees. We can stand, walk, sit, or lie down!

IV. THE PROSECUTION OF DANIEL

Daniel 6:12-18

Then they approached and spoke before the king about the king’s injunction, “Did you not sign an injunction that any man who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, is to be cast into the lions’ den?” The king replied, “The statement is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked.”¹³ Then they answered and spoke before the king, “Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day.”¹⁴ Then, as soon as the king heard this statement, he was deeply distressed and set his mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him.¹⁵ Then these men



came by agreement to the king and said to the king, “Recognize, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or statute which the king establishes may be changed.”¹⁶ Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions’ den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, “Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you.”¹⁷ A stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel.¹⁸ Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him.

Daniel’s enemies immediately noted Daniel’s infraction of the law and reported it to the king. Darius realized too late that he had been tricked into setting his signature to the diabolical edict. He desperately tried to find some loophole in the law, but it was binding. A Medo-Persian law sealed with the king’s signet ring could not be revoked. Darius had no alternative except to carry out the demands of the law and cast Daniel into the den of lions. “[W]hat we are witnessing here is a showdown between the evil rulers of Babylon and the prophet Daniel of Judah. It is a battle between the lions of Babylon which are the demon-gods of Babylon and their worshippers—and the Lion of Judah, Daniel’s defender, the Lord himself. Here again, we see with increasing clarity the reality of spiritual warfare portrayed in the story of Daniel.”⁷

V. THE PROTECTION OF DANIEL

Daniel 6:19-22

Then the king arose at dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions’ den.²⁰ When he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?”²¹ Then Daniel spoke to the king, “O king, live forever!²² My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime.”

As soon as it was daybreak, Darius hastened to the execution chamber to see what had happened to Daniel. Daniel reports that God had protected him from the vicious lions. “He used an angel, probably Daniel’s own guardian angel. All believers have one. Both Paul and Peter saw theirs. David said, ‘The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them’ (Ps. 34:7 KJV).”⁸

Daniel 6:23-24

Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.²⁴ The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children and their wives into the lions’ den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.





King Darius was delighted to find Daniel unharmed. The faith of Daniel brought his deliverance. Even the New Testament highlights his faith, which resulted in his deliverance from the lions: “Who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions” (Heb. 11:33). After Daniel was taken out of the lions’ den, the men who plotted his destruction, and their families, were fed to the lions. What a sad consequence for their envy!

VI. THE PRONOUNCEMENT OF THE KING

Daniel 6:25-28

Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language who were living in all the land: “May your peace abound! ²⁶I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion will be forever. ²⁷He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.” ²⁸So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

The king celebrated the occasion by sending a peace proclamation into the whole empire exalting Daniel’s living, faithful, and eternal God. A pagan king again praises the God of the Bible. Our sovereign God works His will through human vessels.⁹

CONCLUSION

Why are we left on earth after our salvation? That we might grow in Christ and become conformed to the His image (Rom. 8:28-29). We are also to make Christ Jesus the Messiah known through every phase of our earthly experience. The lions were used of God as instruments to touch the heart of a lost man. “The miracles in Daniel, as elsewhere, are not merely ‘contrary to nature’ or ‘above nature’. They are primarily ‘contrary to evil’ and the powers of darkness. They are expressions of ‘the powers of the coming age’ when all evil will be vanquished.”¹⁰ Regular habits of prayer and Bible reading are the only safeguards to living in a corrupt society. We live in a corrupt society even now in Babylon America. Have lion-like courage in your daily walk. Spend quality time talking to God and meditating on His Word. It will fortify and strengthen you for the battles ahead.

Those who live godly lives are bound to suffer persecution. Expect it! In 1 Peter 2, Peter wrote to encourage the early saints about the reality of suffering and to encourage suffering saints to live in a manner pleasing and honoring to the Lord—even if it meant death. Like the three Hebrew young men in a previous Bible study, Daniel knew God could deliver him from the lions, but he was prepared to be delivered through death. The Holy Spirit wants us to see God’s providence in Daniel’s life. It is not a coincidence. God uses different trials to build our lives. They might include the den of tragedy, the den of pain, the den of financial reversal,

the den of loss or the den of disappointment. And the list could go on.¹¹ Will you have the courage and faith of Daniel when trial comes?



Pastor Arin Hess

FOOTNOTES

1. William J. Federer, *America's God and Country: Encyclopedia of Quotations*, 2017, pg. 278.
2. Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Resolute (Daniel): Determining to Go God's Direction*, David C. Cook, Kindle Edition, 2000, pg. 77.
3. All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.
4. John MacArthur, <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/27-14/daniel-in-the-lions-den/>.
5. Rand Hummel, *The Daniel Dilemma: Real Courage for Real Life*, JourneyForth Books, 2016, pg. 62.
6. John Phillips, *Exploring the Book of Daniel: An Expository Commentary*, Kregel Publications, 2009.
7. Michael Youssef, *Leading the Way Through Daniel*, Harvest House, 2012, pg. 147.
8. John Phillips, *Exploring the Book of Daniel*.
9. S. B. Ferguson, "Daniel," in D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, and G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible Commentary: 21st century edition*, Inter-Varsity Press, 1994, pg. 756.
10. John Phillips, *Exploring the Book of Daniel*.
11. Some of this material is taken from Edward Watke, Jr., *Study of the Book of Daniel*, Revival in the Home Ministries, Augusta, GA, 1992.

Theme Verse

Daniel said,

“Let the name of God be **blessed** forever and ever,

For **wisdom** and **power** belong to Him.

It is He who changes the **times** and the **epochs**;

He **removes** kings and **establishes** kings;

He gives **wisdom** to wise men and **knowledge** to men of understanding.”

Daniel 2:20-21



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