

February 18, 2024

“Faith in Times of Trouble”

Daniel 6: multiple verses

Lesson 3

Intro

Several years have passed between the events and last week’s lesson from Daniel 3 and today’s study from Daniel 6. The biggest change is that a new empire, the Persians, have replaced the Babylonians. The new king was Darius, but likely not the same one mentioned in Ezra, Haggai, and Zechariah. This Darius appointed 120 satraps (regional governors) to oversee the administration of his kingdom, and over them were three commissions. Daniel was one of these commissioners. Daniel did so well that he gained the king’s favor, and Darius planned to set Daniel over the whole kingdom, second only to the king in power. The other commissioners and the satraps were jealous, and tried to find a way to bring Daniel down. When they couldn’t find a way, they made a way.

They encouraged Darius to make a decree that no one was allowed to pray to any deity or man except the king himself for 30 days. If they did, they would be thrown into a den of lions. The jealous men moved the king to issue the decree “in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.” This means that even the king himself, once he puts a law into place, cannot take it back.

Read Daniel 6:10-16

1. vs. 10: Daniel’s immediate reaction on learning of the decree is to go home and pray
 - His windows face Jerusalem, so he could pray towards his home and his God
 - God himself commands this several times in 1 Kings 8
 - Daniel follows his usual practice of kneeling to pray three times a day
 - He does not change his practice; he does what he knows is right
2. vs. 11: The men who pushed the king into making the decree are obviously watching Daniel
 - When Daniel prays in front of his window, they see it and nab him in the act
3. vs. 14: In verses 12-13, two important things occur
 - First, the king is reminded he signed a decree making it illegal to pray except to the king
 - Then he is told that Daniel has disobeyed that command and prayed to his God
 - Here is vs. 14 it says the king was “greatly distressed”
 - He realizes he has been manipulated by these men
 - He is distressed at his own actions, not at Daniel for praying to God
 - Darius seeks to find a way to save Daniel, before he is thrown to the lions at sundown
4. vs. 16: Darius could not find a way, because the law could not be repealed
 - Daniel must be thrown into the lions’ den
 - It may seem odd that the king had a den of lions on his grounds
 - The Assyrians kept them for a royal lion hunt
 - This is why the lions are already there
 - The king gives the order required by the law he himself put into place
 - Daniel is thrown into the lions’ den

The king was distressed about what is happening to Daniel
His words to Daniel seem genuine and caring
“May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!”

Read Daniel 6:19-23, 26

5. vs. 19: The king gets up “at the first light of dawn”

He is in a state of urgency—he *must* find out what’s happened to Daniel
In vs. 17, it states that the lion’s den was sealed by the king and his officials
No one could break in to save Daniel without disobeying the law
Daniel only survives the night if God helps him

6. vs. 20: Darius calls out to Daniel “in an anguished voice”

He is concerned for Daniel, and worried about him
The things he calls out to Daniel also show a growing knowledge of God
The Babylonian gods cannot give life to their worshippers
Darius calls God “the living God”—one who lives and gives life
Darius notes again that Daniel serves God “continually”
Daniel is devoted to God, which is why he is in the lion’s den

7. vs. 21: Daniel answers the king here

The fact that he answers shows that he is alive
God indeed has rescued his faithful servant from the lions
Daniel’s answer is also unusual for two reasons
This is the only time in the book of Daniel that an Israelite greets the king this way
Daniel’s greeting is kind for the one who (unintentionally) put him in the lions’ den

8. vs. 22: Daniel announces that an angel came from God and shut the lions’ mouths

Daniel has been saved because God intervened
Daniel also says the reason why he was protected by God
“I was found innocent in his sight”
God rescues Daniel because he showed faithfulness to Him before a pagan king
Daniel also says that he is innocent of doing anything wrong against the king

9. vs. 23: The king’s response is what we would expect it to be

He is overjoyed
He commands Daniel to be brought out of the lion’s den
And as we would expect, Daniel is without any wounds
He not only wasn’t eaten, he wasn’t even scratched

10. vs. 26: Darius takes two actions after getting Daniel out of the lion’s den

In vs. 24, he commands a penalty on those officials who unjustly accused Daniel
They, their wives, and their children are thrown into the lions’ den
The text says they were destroyed before they even reached the ground
Second, Darius issues a decree for all the people in his kingdom to fear Daniel’s God
In chapter 3 Nebuchadnezzar decreed that no one speak against God
Darius goes further: people are to fear and reverence God

Since Darius is a pagan king, the “fear” includes being afraid of consequences

In the second half of verse 26, Darius tells why the people should fear God
“He is the living God, and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his
dominion will never end.”

Daniel’s God is a God of life

Daniel’s God is eternal, enduring forever

God’s kingdom can’t be destroyed and will never end

This could be acknowledging that Darius’ kingdom will end—that’s big to admit

11. vs. 27: This verse continues Darius’ reasons the people are to fear and reverence God

“He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth.

He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.”

These ideas are all inter-connected.

God rescues and saves—he saved Daniel from the lions.

This is a wonder to the king and these pagan peoples

These miraculous works God does for His people

The king acknowledges how God works for His people

Application: We usually think of confession as admitting a sin or a failure of some kind. But a confession is also telling good news. Daniel confesses what happened when God chose to intervene on his behalf when he was thrown to the lions. The king confesses the truth about who God is and why He is to be feared and revered. We are called to the same kind of confession—telling of what God has done and who He is, so that others (in Christ and out of Christ currently) will know why He is to be praised. Daniel’s faithfulness to God brought Darius around to understanding better who God is. We get to do the same thing.

Prayer: Father God, thank You that you live forever, and that You work in us to mold us into the likeness of Jesus. Give us courage to face any adversity and to maintain our faithfulness to You. Help us to live so that others are drawn to get closer to You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.