

Daniel #10

March 10, 2024

Series Title: Daniel's Visions Of the Ages

Today's Message: God Delivers Daniel (and what we can learn from it); Daniel 6:1-28

Daniel 6 is an amazing recounting of the events leading up to and following Daniel's miraculous deliverance from the lions in the lions' den. The deliverance is impressive. But perhaps more impressive and helpful is how calmly and faithfully Daniel responded when the threats and pressures, lies and lions were standing boldly in front of him. And what is more, Daniel was probably in his 80's when he faced these trials!

Daniel provides a great example for both the young and old. For the young he is a good example because he committed the strength of his youth to building a lifetime of God-pleasing integrity. We can see this in the very first chapters of Daniel. His commitment to obey God's laws formed godly character, which provided the kind of integrity that was valued and useful among the Babylonians. For the elderly he serves as good example of continuing to practice his integrity and faithfulness with a robust zeal at a point in his life when it would be easier to ride off into the sunset of retirement.

We have stories in the Bible like Daniel in the lions' den, or Israel standing at the edge of the Red Sea with the Egyptians closing in on them, or David facing the giant Goliath, and many other such stories, to stir up our faith! No matter your age, no matter the lions or giants, Red Seas, or fiery furnaces, these are written "to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."

One of the most important ways an elderly Christian can best serve the younger believers is by demonstrating full faith and trust in God through the trials and obstacles of life. You can demonstrate this best when the obstacles, storms of life, frightening situations, and even aging are, instead of deadening your faith, are actually working to stir up your faith! If you an older believer, you need to be committed to living a life that shouts, "The life I live I live by faith in the Son of God! He is my shield and defender! He is my Rock and my Salvation!"

Younger Christians need you who are older to stand firmly in the face of trials holding to your integrity and a faith that drips with the testimony, "No matter what happens, my God is able to deliver me (see Daniel 3:17-18)!"

That's a good question to ask you, is your God able to deliver you? Is your god *Plenty (money)*? Is your god *Pleasure*? Is your god *Power*? To be sure *Plenty, Pleasure and Power* will not deliver you from peril in times of trouble. Only the One True God Jesus Christ will deliver you! Only "He is able to save completely forever those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them (you). (Hebrews 7:24-25)"

What we see in Daniel 6 is the fruit of integrity decades in the making through the exercise of faithfulness and obedience to God. Please remember that Daniel lived in a fully pagan environment. By faith he remained unstained by the pagan pressure and influence that circled all around him. We know this because as we will see, the men who hated him could find absolutely no hypocrisy in him. They looked hard. Most of us could not stand under this kind of intense scrutiny. What if light shined on our purchases, both in store and online? What if the light was shined on our internet histories or our social media postings? Would we be found innocent? We would do well to stop and think and consider how will your history, your decisions, your actions, both public and private—how will these represent you?

We can't be Daniel, or at least the majority of us will fall short. But we can repent, and start building godly habits and practices that will strengthen our testimony and help us to stand in the tough times of trouble. We cannot change the past, but we can begin fresh and anew, building the quality of our tomorrows today.

With that in mind, the outline: 1) The Personal attributes of Daniel (6:1-3); 2) The Plan against Daniel (6:4-9); 3) The Prayer of Daniel (6:10-11); 4) The Prosecution of Daniel (6:12-17); 5) The Protection of Daniel (6:18-28).

I) (6:1-3) The Personal Attributes of Daniel

- A) Darius the Mede includes Daniel among his top three leaders
 - 1) Darius ruled over Babylonian Kingdom for the Medes (5:31; 6:1; 9:1) and Cyrus expanded the realm and ruled over the extended empire for the Persians (10:1)
 - (a) Remember Daniel 2:32 and 39 describing a weaker but co-regency: The Medes and Persians.
- B) Darius appointed leaders to govern the empire.
 - 1) Satraps: 120 to be like governors of the provinces; “Protectors of the Realm”.
 - (a) Like kings, with a full staff and authority to collect taxes and judge as the supreme judge.
 - 2) Administrators: 3 to be over the 120 governors/ kings, holding them accountable.
- C) Daniel: more than a government employee, was an exemplary government employee
 - 1) Why would the king desire to set him over all the kingdom (see 6:3)? **The 5 “C’s” of integrity.**¹
 - (a) A man of character, distinguishing himself among [all] by his exceptional qualities.” (6:3)
 - (i) “We make it our goal to please God” –2 Cor. 5:9; see also Phil. 4:8-9
 - (b) A man of consistency, try as they might the accusers could find nothing against him. (6:4-9)
 - (i) “Blessed are they whose ways are blameless,” –Psalm 119:1; Eph.5:27; Phil.2:15; 1 Th.3:13
 - (c) A man of conviction, the threat of death did not cause compromise. (6:10-15)
 - (i) “Put on the full armor of God, so that in the evil day, you will stand your ground.” –Eph.6:13
 - (d) A man of conscience, he was innocent of before God and the king (6:22)
 - (i) “Be shrewd and snakes and innocent as doves.” –Matt.10:16; 1 Peter 3:16
 - (e) A man of courage, even with the possibility of death he trusted God (6:23)
 - (i) “...stand firm in the faith; be men of courage.” –1 Cor.16:13; Joshua 1:6; Acts 23:11
 - 2) Application: How could you begin cultivating the “5 C’s of Integrity” in your life today?

II) (6:4-9) The Plan Against Daniel

- A) The quest of the 120 governor/ kings to discover hypocrisy, compromise, and corruption.
- B) They then schemed to use Daniel’s integrity as a weapon against him. (6:5)
 - 1) (6:6-8) They flattered Darius into publishing a decree making it mandatory that all prayers to all gods (including Daniel’s God) must be prayed “to Darius.”
 - (a) Most likely they did not see Darius as a god, but rather as *the mediator*. So, they must pray to their gods, or in Daniel’s case to God, through Darius, *the mediator*.
 - 2) (6:9) Darius published the decree making it an irrevocable law.

III) (6:10-11) The Prayer of Daniel

- A) When the decree was published Daniel knew the time of testing had come.
 - 1) Loyalty to God or loyalty to the king.
 - (a) Daniel’s “5 C’s of Integrity” are put to the test.
 - (i) Daniel could get along and subject himself to the “governing authorit[y], or...”
 - (ii) He could “once again do what was right and trust God for the results.” (Showers)
 - (a) Like the apostles Peter and John who said to the religious leaders in Acts 5:29, “We must obey God rather than men.” They suffered the punishment of flogging.
- B) Daniel chose to obey God.
 - 1) He prayed believing like Paul, “That no temptation has seized you except that which is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tested beyond your ability to endure. But when you are tested, He will also provide a way of escape so that you can stand under it.” (1 Cor. 10:13)
 - 2) He asked God for help! (See Deuteronomy 33:26-27; Psalm 18:1-19, especially verse 6)
- C) Daniel chose to suffer the consequences rather than compromise his integrity!

¹ The following list is from an unknown source, possibly Lehman Strauss. I have taken the liberty to call them the “5 C’s of Integrity”.

- 1) He was caught in the act of prayer.
- 2) It was his life-long habit. He wasn't going to stop now. God had not failed him yet!
- D) Daniel chose not to "go along to get along." How about you? Will you follow Daniel's example?
 - 1) What areas of your life have you been willing to compromise in order to "get along"?

IV) (6:12-17) The Prosecution of Daniel

- A) The men went in a frenzy (6:15) to the king and told that Daniel had contempt for the king's decree.
- B) They reminded the king of the irrevocable decree and the judgment upon all who defy the decree.
- C) Upon hearing the news Darius was greatly distressed, and was determined to save Daniel (6:14), nevertheless, Darius had Daniel thrown in the lions' den (6:16)
 - 1) He valued Daniel and wished that Daniel's God would rescue him.
- D) (6:17) But, the decree was irrevocable, and the king had the den sealed shut.
 - 1) In a similar way Jesus' tomb was sealed with the official seal. Even so, Jesus came forth, even as Daniel came forth alive from what was to be his tomb! Daniel's coming out of the tomb alive may be a foreshadowing of Christ's resurrection!

V) (6:18-28) The Protection of Daniel

- A) While the king could not eat or sleep, I imagine Daniel's clear conscience allowed him to sleep. (6:18)
- B) (6:19-20) First thing in the morning the king went to hear if Daniel was alive!
 - 1) He called out to Daniel "in an anguished voice."
 - (a) He was weary and stressed, and as we will see Daniel is alive and refreshed!
 - 2) Telling words: "Daniel, servant of the **living God, has your God...rescued you...?**"
 - (a) Daniel's life was a *shining light* in the midst of the darkness of the dark world of Darius.
 - (i) Darius recognized the shining difference!
 - (a) Believers are to live noticeably different lives! Philippians 2:15 encourages believers to "become blameless and pure (like Daniel), children of God without fault (like Daniel) in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you *shine like stars* in the universe!"
 - (b) The Believer is to be vibrant, full of the Holy Spirit, pure, not grieving the Spirit. Jesus said, "You are the light of the world...Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matt. 5:14,16)
 - (ii) You must concern yourself with your integrity both publicly and privately!
- C) (6:21) Daniel, who for all intents and purposes was "dead" in the den, but was alive, yet asking for eternal life (Live forever) for the man who was the real dead man!
 - 1) It makes you wonder if, like Nebuchadnezzar, Darius truly believed in the Living God of Daniel!
 - (a) Looking at the decree issued by Darius in 6:25-27 and consider if Darius had faith in God!
- D) (6:22-23) Daniel's testimony
 - 1) "My God sent His angel and He shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me because I found favor in His sight."
 - (a) It must have been *The Angel of the Lord*, the preincarnate Christ, like in Daniel 3:25!
 - 2) And as Daniel abided in His comforting presence so it is Christ who stands with us as we faithfully **trust** Him (sticking to, beholding, adoring, loving and obeying Him.)
 - (a) Paul writes in 2 Timothy 4:17-18 for our encouragement and hope: "But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and all the Gentiles might hear it. **And I was delivered from the lion's mouth!** The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen!"
- E) Why do we have stories like Daniel, Israel trapped by the Red Sea with Pharaoh pursuing, or David and Goliath, etc.? Romans 15:4 explains once more: "For whatever was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." Read the word. Study it. Love it. Let it love you challenge you and change you!