

November 1, 2020

God's Faithful Servant Is Saved from the Lions' Mouth

Read Daniel 6:1-5

Who is Darius the Mede?

- An optional translation of Dan. 6:28- "So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, **that is**, in the reign of Cyrus the Persian" – similar to 1 Chronicles 5:26 where a king went by multiple names
- Herodotus- "Cyrus" was not the Persian king's given name, his mother was a Mede
- Cyrus II "the Great" – on his father's side he was descended from three generations of Persian kings
 - his father was a vassal king to the Medes and married the daughter of a Median king
- Cyrus II rules Persia in 559 BC, rebelling against his mother's father to take over Media in 550 BC

- v. 3 "became distinguished" – a passive voice statement, who is behind it?
 - "an excellent spirit" – the Holy Spirit enlightens with His gifts
 - "planned to set him over the whole kingdom" – will he
- v. 4 "ground for complaint...with regard to the kingdom" – laziness, corruption, disrespect
- v. 5 "the Law of his God" – maybe they had copies of the Torah, or just witnessed it in Daniel's life

The Main Point: "This decision by the Babylonian officials tells us that Daniel's religious practices are known to those around him. Daniel does not hide his faith. Moreover, they understand that Daniel's dedication to worship Israel's God means that he will not neglect God's command to worship."
(A. Steinmann, page 314)

Read Daniel 6:6-9

- v. 7 how does this law differ from Nebuchadnezzar's decree in Daniel 3?
 - "thirty days" – one month without praying or worshiping any god except the king
 - Which commandment(s) does this ordinance violate?

The Main Point: "[T]his account supplements the message of Daniel 3 by reminding readers that not only is it imperative to avoid idolatry even in the face of persecution, but believers also cannot compromise the one true faith by neglecting the worship of God, even when that worship exposes believers to persecution and death. Neglecting to worship God is as much a denial of the true God as bowing down to idols."
(A. Steinmann, page 300)

Read Daniel 6:10-15

- v. 10 "toward Jerusalem"- See Solomon's dedication prayer 1 Kings 8:27-53, 9:3
 - "got down on his knees..." not mere custom or nostalgia, he trusts the promise from 1 Kings
 - "three times a day" – Psalm 55:17, 119:164; Ex. 30:7-8; Psalm 141:2
 - "as he had done previously" – "Daniel could have tried to rationalize that simply refraining from prayer for thirty days would not deny the one true God nor his own faith in him. However, he knows that God has commanded prayer and graciously invited his people to bring their requests to him. Prayer expresses his communion with God in faith and also is a testimony to others about his trust in God. Therefore, God's command and promise to hear and answer compel Daniel to continue his custom of praying. Thus Daniel understands that refraining from practicing his faith is as good as denying his faith in God."
(A. Steinmann, page 317).
- v. 13 "pays no attention to you, O king" – is this true? Daniel *ignores the decree*, but has he wronged Cyrus?
- v. 14 the greatest earthly king cannot rescue Daniel, even though he desires to

Read Daniel 6:16-24

- v. 16 “May your God...deliver you” – the king could not, so perhaps God can
- v. 18 the compassion of the king is truly touching
- v. 20 “the living God” a title often used in Scripture, but this is the only place where a Gentile says it!
- v. 22 “shut the lions’ mouths”- perhaps the lions saw the angel – Numbers 22:23-31 Morning Prayer
“blameless before Him” – righteousness by faith in God and also innocent before the king
- v. 24 this picture of the lions is a good example of what the absence of God’s protection means

The Main Point: “Daniel declares that he was saved because he is righteous before God, who ‘found me innocent before him’. His faith was evident in his faithfulness in worship and prayer, even when threatened with the penalty of death. He was confident that not even death would separate him from his loving God.” (A. Steinmann, page 321)

Read Daniel 6:25-28

- v. 26 “tremble and fear before the God of Daniel” – compare it to Nebuchadnezzar (3:29)
- v. 26-27- This is a pretty powerful confession
“his kingdom shall never be destroyed” – nice transition to the visions to come (Dan 7–12)
- v. 28 “prospered” – but was never placed over the whole kingdom

Parallels to the Life of Christ (see also Psalm 22)

Both prayed regularly – Daniel 6:10 // Luke 5:16

Malicious accusers re: worship practices – Daniel 6:5 // Matthew 4:6-10; 22:15-46

A crowd drags them to a pagan ruler – Daniel 6:11-13 // Matthew 26:47-50; 27:1-2, 11-14; John 18:1–19:15

The ruler deems him innocent, seeks freedom, gives in to condemnation – Dan 6:14-16 // Mt 27:18-26, Jn 19

Daniel and Jesus “trusted in his God” – Daniel 6:23 // Matthew 27:43

A rock over the pit/tomb, sealed by the king – Daniel 6:17 // Matthew 27:66

Both emerge alive!