

BIBLE STORY: DANIEL AND THE LIONS' DEN

Daniel 6:1-23

Central Thoughts

- The First Commandment teaches us to trust in God above all things, even if it costs us our life.
- The Second Commandment teaches us to call upon God in every trouble, to pray only to Him, to praise Him above all others, and to give thanks to Him in every circumstance of life.
- Faith in the Lord above all things enables us to be a faithful citizen, civil ruler, and neighbor even to those who do not believe in Christ.
- Daniel is a picture of Jesus: He only worshiped the Lord. He “feared, loved, and trusted in God above all things.”
- God will always bless faithfulness to Him whether in life or in death.

Discussion Questions

Note: The Persian Empire conquered the Babylonian Empire in 539 BC, according to the prophecy of “the handwriting on the wall” that Daniel interpreted for Belshazzar, king of Babylon at the time (Daniel 5:13-30). Belshazzar was killed as predicted and Darius the Mede from Persia became king in his place. Darius installed 120 Satraps (provincial governors) over the empire of Persia who were supervised by three governors or presidents. Daniel, a distinguished Jew, and faithful civil servant to all the kings he served under, was one of those three governors. Daniel soon distinguished himself above all the officials of government because the Spirit of the Lord gave him superior wisdom and understanding to serve King Darius the Mede faithfully. The other governors and satraps became envious of the position and favor that Daniel enjoyed from Darius.

Why did the governors and satraps seek to find a charge of wrongdoing against Daniel?

They wanted to destroy him because they were envious of the appreciation and favor he enjoyed from Darius the Mede for his faithful service.

Could these men find any evidence against Daniel for breaking any of the civil laws of Persia?

No, Daniel was a faithful governor who dutifully obeyed all the laws of the empire as long as they did not violate his faith in the Lord.

What did these men know that Daniel would never do?

They knew that he would never deny his faith and worship of the Lord, even if his life were threatened. Daniel “feared, loved, and trusted in God above all things.”

Why did the jealous officials persuade King Darius to establish a royal statute (a law) that demanded that all the citizens of the realm must worship only King Darius, or be thrown into the den of lions?

They knew that Daniel would not worship the king, so they could bring the charge against him that would result in his death in the lions' den.

What is significant about a royal decree that was established “according to the Law of the Medes and Persians”?

It cannot be changed or altered, even by the king, until the terms of the decree had been fulfilled.

What did Daniel do as soon as he learned that the decree had been signed by King Darius?

He went to his home and continued to pray and worship the Lord alone as the First and Second Commandments direct us to do. He prayed to the Lord three times each day as he was accustomed to do.

What did the jealous officials of the empire immediately do once they found evidence against Daniel that he was violating the royal decree to worship the king?

They brought charges against Daniel, demanding that he be cast into the den of lions as the decree demanded.

Why didn't Darius the Mede want to cast Daniel into the den of lions?

He respected Daniel and knew that he had served him faithfully as a governor and better than any other official of the realm.

How did Darius show his respect for Daniel and Daniel's God?

He did not eat, sleep, or enjoy music all that night while Daniel was in the den of lions. In the morning, he went early to the den of lions. He confessed that the God of Daniel alone was the living God and cried out to Daniel in the hope that God had saved him.

How did Daniel confess his faith in God and continue to honor the king, even though he had been cast into the den of lions?

He prayed that the King would live forever and joyfully confessed, "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

How is Daniel a picture of Jesus?

Just as Daniel served his neighbor and the king faithfully as a governor in the empire of Persia, so the Lord Jesus faithfully kept God's law throughout His life out of love for God and love for the world He was called to redeem. Just as Daniel "feared, loved, and trusted in God above all things," even though he was called upon to forfeit his life rather than deny his faith in the Lord, so the Lord Jesus trusted in His Father above all things and suffered death itself rather than fall away from God. Just as Daniel was innocent, yet sentenced to death, so the Lord Jesus was innocent, yet sentenced to death on our behalf. Just as the Lord delivered Daniel from the mouths of the lions, so the Lord Jesus was delivered from the jaws of death in the resurrection.

How did Darius the Mede respond to Daniel's faithfulness to the Lord?

He was glad and commanded that Daniel be brought up out of the den of lions because Daniel believed in his God.

Meditation on the Bible Story

Daniel is an example of a man who, by the grace of God, feared, loved, and trusted in God above all things. The Lord alone was the strength of his life and faith, so he did not worship other gods and he only prayed to the Lord. Out of his faith in the Lord above all things, Daniel faithfully served the unbelieving king. He not only served him, but he also prayed for a successful reign. Daniel's faith in the Lord did not prevent him from serving in the civil government, but rather enabled him to become a valued governor of the land because of the wisdom that his faith gave him. Daniel, like Jesus, exhibited the Lord's grace and wisdom in all his conduct. Other officials of government hated Daniel as they would later hate Jesus after him. His enemies knew that Daniel would never deny his Lord, so they successfully enacted a law that they knew Daniel could never obey. He must worship only the king for 30 days or be cast into the den of lions. The law could not be changed. It had to be fulfilled. After the Law was enacted, Daniel prayed to the Lord as he always had, and he was cast into the den of lions because of it. In the same way, God's law cannot be changed. God's law must be fulfilled. Jesus fulfilled the Law by dying upon the cross for us. When he was cast upon the cross, He never failed to fear, love, and trust in God above all things and to pray fervently to His heavenly Father for help. As Daniel was delivered from the hungry lions, so Jesus rose from the jaws of death in the resurrection. In Jesus, the demands of the Law are fulfilled, and by His grace we are strengthened to be faithful to the Lord, and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from Him.

Prayer on the Bible Story

Lord God, heavenly Father, as You strengthened Daniel to believe and trust in You with all his heart, even though he was threatened with death, so strengthen us to trust in you above all things, to be willing to suffer for our faith in Christ, and to pray to You fervently at all times, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



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