

FPFWC Christian Development



The Righteous Live By Faith

February 2024

Winter Quarter

February 17, 2024

Lesson #3 – Faith In Times of Trouble

SCRIPTURE TEXT –Daniel 6:10-11, 14, 16, 19-23, 26-27

ICE BREAKERS-

1. How can you guard against your daily prayer time becoming a dry ritual?
2. What do we gain by learning to wait on the Lord?
3. How do you encourage others as they wait for God’s deliverance?

Key Verse: “My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.—Daniel 6:22

LESSON BACKGROUND –

The context for this lesson is generally the same as last lesson. However, several years had passed between the events of Daniel 3 (last lesson) and today’s Scripture. The most notable is that a new empire replaced the Babylonians: the Persians (2 Chronicles 36:15–20).

After a hand wrote a message of warning to Babylonian king Belshazzar, the king died (see Daniel 5:1–30). Scripture does not reveal exactly how he died, only that it occurred and that the 62-year-old “Darius the Median” (5:31), “son of Ahasuerus” (9:1), replaced him in power. Outside of Scripture, there is no mention of this particular “Darius,” and it was a common name; therefore identifying him is nearly impossible. He is likely not the same as the Persian king Darius I (also known as Darius the Great) (reigned 522–486 BC) mentioned in Ezra 4–6; Haggai 1–2; Zechariah 1; 7; and perhaps in Nehemiah 12:22. One proposal identifies our “Darius” as a regional governor of Babylon, installed under the oversight of Cyrus. Another proposal hypothesizes that “Darius” was another name for a Persian commander who led the Persian army into Babylon.

Today’s study has as its backdrop the appointment of 120 “princes” under the oversight of three “presidents” that included Daniel (see Daniel 6:1–2). Daniel’s reputation with previous kings influenced Darius. The king “preferred” Daniel over all the other princes and presidents and “sought to set [Daniel] over the whole realm” (6:3). However, the king’s high regard for Daniel led Daniel’s peers to scheme against him. Although they tried to find fault with Daniel, they could not find grounds to file charges against him (6:4–5). Instead, they developed a trap that Darius could not overturn.

Their plan encouraged Darius to establish a statute that whoever should pray to any deity or man, except the king, for 30 days would be thrown into the den of lions (see Daniel

6:7). Prayer *for* a monarch was standard in the ancient Near East. But prayer *to* a monarch was exceptional. Further, the officials maneuvered the king to issue the decree “according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not” (6:8). There would be little Darius could do to prevent the enforcement of the statute after it he “signed the writing and the decree” (6:9).

LESSON COMMENTARY

6:10–11. Even though the law prohibiting prayer had gone into effect, Daniel still prayed with his **windows open toward Jerusalem**. Jewish people in exile always pray toward Jerusalem—even today—just as Solomon had directed in his prayer of dedication for the temple (1Kg 8:44–49). Daniel prayed **three times a day** either because this was his own personal devotional habit or perhaps because the Jewish custom of morning, afternoon, and evening prayers had already been established. Daniel prayed not out of rebellion to the king but out of obedience to the greater command of God. As the apostles would later say, “We must obey God rather than men” (Ac 5:29). So great was Daniel’s reputation for spiritual commitment that even his enemies knew that he would obey God rather than the king’s edict.

6:12–14. The conspirators reminded the king of his injunction and notified him of Daniel’s behavior. As a result, the king **was deeply distressed** at hearing of Daniel’s disobedience, not because Daniel had defied him, but because the king now understood that the true purpose of the law was to entrap Daniel. As a result, the king was **exerting himself** to find a way **to rescue** Daniel—but he was trapped by his own law and could not deliver Daniel.

3. The Punishment of Daniel (6:15–18)

6:15–16. Since **the law of the Medes and the Persians** could not be overturned, Daniel was thrown **into the lions’ den** as punishment. The Persians used mutilation by lions as one of several brutal forms of execution. The king hoped that the **God whom** Daniel **constantly serve[d]** would **deliver** him.

6:19–23. Early the next morning, when the king came to inquire of Daniel’s condition, Daniel told the king that **God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths**. God uses angels to accomplish his purposes, including protection of His people (Ps 34:7; 91:11; Heb 1:14). He did so for Daniel’s three friends in the furnace many years before this incident (3:25). As on that occasion, this may have been not merely an angel but the Angel of the Lord (i.e., a pre-incarnate appearance of the Messiah) who rescued Daniel.

Daniel was not claiming perfection in declaring that he **was found innocent before** God. Rather, Daniel claimed that his allegiance to God, even above the king, made him guiltless in this matter. Nevertheless, it was not Daniel’s works that brought him deliverance from God but his faith, **because he had trusted in his God**.

The Praise of Daniel’s God (6:25–27)

6:25–27. Just as King Nebuchadnezzar did before him (4:2), so Darius issued a decree to **all the peoples, nations and men of every language** (cf. 4:2) declaring praise to the

God of Daniel. Darius recognized the greatness of God: that **He is the living God**, eternal, sovereign and powerful, and able to rescue his people, even as He **delivered Daniel from the power of the lions**. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that Darius came to a saving faith at this point but instead accepted the God of Israel into the panoply of gods.

LESSON NUGGET – **The Prayer Crisis** – The officers lied when they used the word “all”, for that gave the king the idea that Daniel agreed with them. But no laws or threats could keep Daniel from his times of prayer. Is prayer to you a matter of life and death? It was to Daniel!

Sources: Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, The Word for Today Bible, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary